

## Nutrition Tips to Manage Your Diabetes

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As part of your diabetes treatment plan, it is important to eat healthy, stay active and maintain a healthy body weight. This can help keep your blood sugar in control and protect you from the long-term problems of diabetes.

Your health care team will work with you to personalize your diet and choose an eating plan that is best for you. You can manage your diabetes and still eat the foods you enjoy. All foods can fit into a healthy diet. Your doctor or dietitian may want you to limit the amount of carbohydrates you eat during each meal or snack. Your doctor may also order medicine for you to use to help control your blood sugar.

These tips will help you learn more ways you can improve your diet to better control your diabetes.

- **Eat a Variety of Food**

- ▶ Choose to eat different foods from all food groups, including lean protein, whole grains, fruits, non-starchy vegetables and low-fat dairy.

- **Choose Healthy Sources of Carbohydrates**

- ▶ Carbohydrates (carbs) are one of the main nutrients in your foods and drinks. Sources of carbohydrates include starches, sugars and fiber.
- ▶ Choose carbs from non-starchy vegetables, whole fruits, beans and dairy. Stay away from carbs with added fat, sugar and salt, such as chips and sweets.
- ▶ Eat foods with fiber.

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**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

- **Focus on Fiber**
  - ▶ Fiber-rich foods can help you feel full and keep your blood sugar in control.
  - ▶ Eat 25 to 38 grams of fiber each day from a variety of food sources.
  - ▶ Good sources of fiber include:
    - Whole grains breads, pastas, cereal, oatmeal and brown rice
    - Legumes and beans, such as black beans, chickpeas and lentils
    - Fruits, such as blueberries and pears
    - Vegetables, such as leafy greens, broccoli and cauliflower
- **Eat Less Fat**
  - ▶ A diet low in saturated and trans fats can help you manage your weight and decrease your risk for heart disease.
  - ▶ Stay away from fried foods, high-fat meats, whole-fat dairy sources, snack food and eating at fast food restaurants. Try to not add fats, such as butter, sour cream, and gravies to your meals and snacks.
  - ▶ Eat healthy fat sources, such as nuts and seeds, nut butters, avocado and fish. Use vegetable or nut oils when you cook or bake.
- **Do Not Skip Meals**
  - ▶ Find an eating pattern that works for you. To control your blood sugar, it may be best to eat 5 to 6 small meals during the day.
  - ▶ Eat every 3 to 5 hours to help control your appetite and your blood sugar.
  - ▶ Include a carb and protein source each time you eat.
- **Drink Water Often**
  - ▶ Unless told otherwise, drink 8 to 10 cups of water each day to stay hydrated.
  - ▶ Stay away from sugar-sweetened beverages or sugary drinks, such as soda pop, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, sweetened water and coffee and tea beverages with added sugar.
- **Eat Healthy Portions of Food**
  - ▶ It is important to know the amount of food you eating. It may help to use measuring cups to learn about portion sizes and how much you should eat.
  - ▶ Use food labels to know the proper portion size.

- **Read Food Labels**
  - ▶ Use the nutrition food label to know learn about the serving size and the amount of sugar and total carbs in a food.
  - ▶ Compare food labels when you shop to choose the food products that fit best into your diet plan.
- **Stay Away from Foods High in Sugar**
  - ▶ Try to limit food and drinks high in sugar, such as candy, sweets and baked goods, sugar-coated cereal, chips, jelly, syrups and soda pop and sugar sweetened beverages.
  - ▶ Stay away from adding sugar to your meals, snacks and drinks.
  - ▶ Artificial sweeteners, or sugar substitutes, are low-calorie or no-calorie sweeteners that can be used instead of sugar to sweetened foods and drinks. These sweeteners, including Equal, Sweet 'n Low, Sweet One, Splenda and Stevia, should be used in moderation.
- **Use Less Salt**
  - ▶ Try to limit your salt (sodium) intake each day to less than 2,300 mg (1 teaspoon).
  - ▶ Eat foods that are low in salt, such as fruit, vegetables, beans and legumes.
  - ▶ Stay away from high-salt foods, such as processed meats (deli meat, bacon and sausage), snack foods (chips and popcorn) and pre-packaged or ready-to-eat meals.
  - ▶ Use herbs and spices to season your food.
- **Limit Alcohol**
  - ▶ Talk to your doctor about whether it is safe for you to drink alcohol.
  - ▶ If allowed, you may drink alcohol in moderation and always with food. Do not drink alcohol on an empty stomach. Moderate drinking includes:
    - No more than 2 drinks each day for men.
    - No more than 1 drink each day for women.
    - No more than 1 drink each day for people over the age of 65.
  - ▶ A standard drink is one 12-ounce beer, one 5-ounce glass of wine or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.

It is important to eat a variety of food each day, including sources of meat and meat substitutes, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and dairy.

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Select a variety of foods from the following food groups:

- **Protein Foods**

- ▶ Includes all foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, nuts and seeds.
- ▶ Eat 5 to 6 ounces of protein food each day.
- ▶ Choose lean cuts of meat or poultry and low-fat or no-fat dairy options.
- ▶ Eat 2 servings of cooked seafood each week.
- ▶ Good sources of protein include:
  - Lean cuts of beef and pork
  - Lean cuts of chicken and turkey (white meat, without skin)
  - Low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt
  - Eggs
  - Fish and shellfish
  - Beans, including black beans, chickpeas and lentils
  - Nuts and nut butters
  - Soybean and soy-based products, including tofu.

- **Grains**

- ▶ Includes all foods made from grains, such as bread, pasta, oatmeal, rice, tortillas and cereal
- ▶ Eat 5 to 8 ounces of grains each day.
- ▶ Make at least half of the grains you eat a whole grain food source. Check for the word “whole” in the food label ingredient’s list.
- ▶ Good sources of whole grains include:
  - Whole grain breads, tortillas and crackers
  - Oatmeal and whole grain cereals
  - Brown and wild rice
  - Whole grain pasta
  - Low salt popcorn
  - Barley, buckwheat and bulgur

- **Fruits**

- ▶ Includes any fruit or 100% fruit juice. Fruits can be fresh, canned, frozen or dried.
- ▶ Eat 2 to 4 servings each day.
- ▶ Try not to add sugar or syrup to fruit. Choose canned fruit that is pack in natural juice.
- ▶ Do not drink more than ½ cup (4 ounces) of fruit juice each day.

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- **Vegetables**

- ▶ Includes any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice. Vegetables can be raw or cooked, fresh, frozen, canned or dried.
- ▶ Eat 3 to 5 servings each day.
- ▶ Try not to add salt or gravies to vegetables. Choose canned vegetables that are low in salt.
- ▶ To better control your blood sugar, limit the amount of starchy vegetables you eat, including corn, peas and potatoes.
- ▶ Eat non-starchy vegetables, including greens, broccoli, peppers, cucumbers and celery.

- **Dairy**

- ▶ Includes all milk products and foods made from milk, including yogurt, cottage cheese and cheese.
- ▶ Eat or drink 2 to 3 servings each day.
- ▶ Eat or drink low-fat or no-fat dairy products.
- ▶ Good sources of dairy include:
  - Low-fat or non-fat milk
  - Low-fat or non-fat yogurt or cottage cheese
  - Low-fat cheese

To find information online about nutrition and food, ask for the patient education handout, [Nutrition Internet Resources](#).