



NUTRITION TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR TYPE 2 DIABETES

A DIABETES MEAL PLAN FOR HEALTHY LIVING

When you have type 2 diabetes, staying healthy and eating right does not necessarily mean having to be on a strict diet or giving up foods that you enjoy. Choosing the right foods in the right amounts can help you improve your overall health.¹

A well-balanced meal plan can provide your body with just the right kinds of food to help you improve your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol and keep them at healthy levels. Some examples of meal-planning tools can include the plate method and carbohydrate counting.²

Working With a Dietitian

A dietitian is an expert trained in proper nutrition who can help you develop a meal plan that works best for you. He or she can help you learn more about the foods you eat and how they can affect your blood sugar and cholesterol levels.³

Talk to your healthcare team about how you can make healthy food choices. They can provide you with information on a few different meal-planning methods you can choose from to help you eat right.¹



TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

People with type 2 diabetes may feel overwhelmed when it comes to changing their eating habits. Living with type 2 diabetes doesn't mean living without the foods you know and love. Healthy eating is simply making a conscious effort to choose the right balance of foods in the right amounts.⁴

Here are a few easy tips to help you reach your healthy eating goal.

TIP #1

Not All Carbohydrates Are Created Equal

Counting the amount of carbohydrates (carbs) in the foods you eat is a type of meal plan that can help you manage your blood sugar levels. Setting a daily maximum of carbs you eat and keeping track of every snack and meal can help you stay on target.⁵

It's important to remember that there are good carbs and bad carbs, and the right amount of carbs varies depending on your activity level. Get in the habit of always looking at food labels to determine how many grams of total carbs are in the foods you want to eat and what kinds they are—sugar, starch, or fiber. Try to avoid sugary drinks, white bread and rice, and processed cereals. Some helpful tips include^{6,7}:

- Eating whole fruits instead of drinking juice
- Avoiding sugary drinks such as soda, sweet tea, or sports drinks and choosing water or diet soda instead
- Trying whole-grain cereals, oatmeal and bread, whole-wheat pasta, and brown rice. Avoid processed foods such as sugary cereals and white bread enriched with wheat flour



Talk to your healthcare team to determine the right kind and amount of carbs you should eat every day.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

TIP #2

Portion Control Is as Easy as 1-2-3

When focusing on ways to change your eating habits, one simple remedy is to limit your portions during mealtimes. Creating your plate may allow you to continue to eat some of the foods you like by changing your portion sizes so that you eat a larger portion of nonstarchy vegetables and a smaller portion of starchy foods. For example, in creating your plate, the largest section of the plate is for nonstarchy vegetables, like a salad or a side of mixed vegetables.⁴

To create your plate, simply draw an imaginary line down the center of your plate, then another line cutting across one of the halves. Next, select the foods you want to eat by following the guidelines shown below⁴:

Nonstarchy Vegetables

Spinach, lettuce, cucumbers, greens, broccoli, green beans, okra, peppers, cabbage, bok choy, cauliflower, turnips, carrots, beets, mushrooms, tomatoes

Carbohydrates/ Starchy Foods

Whole-grain breads (whole wheat or rye), high-fiber cereal, oatmeal, grits, hominy or cream of wheat, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, cooked beans and peas (pinto beans or black-eyed peas), sweet potatoes, corn, winter squash



Meat or Meat Substitutes

Chicken or turkey without the skin, fish (tuna, salmon, cod, or catfish) or seafood (shrimp, clams, oysters, crab, or mussels), lean cuts of beef and pork (sirloin or pork loin), tofu, eggs, low-fat cheese



Add a serving of fruit and a glass of water, low-fat milk, or low-calorie drink to complete your meal

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

TIP #3

Load Up on Healthy, Low-Carb Snacks

Snacks are an excellent way to curb your hunger and boost your energy, but it's important to avoid snacks that are high in sugar and fats and to keep portion sizes small. Measuring out serving sizes ahead of time for your daily snacks can help you keep portion sizes small.⁸

Here are a few low-carb snacks that can help you feel satisfied during the day⁸:

- 1 low-fat string cheese stick
- 5 baby carrots, 1 small apple, or 3 celery sticks with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter
- 1 cup of light popcorn
- 1 hard-boiled egg
- 15 almonds
- 1 frozen sugar-free popsicle



Top 10 Type 2 Diabetes Superfoods⁶

The following superfoods provide plenty of vitamins, calcium, and fiber and should be a part of your healthy eating plan in appropriate serving sizes:

- Beans such as kidney, pinto, navy, or black beans
- Dark green leafy vegetables, including spinach, collards, and kale
- Citrus fruits that provide plenty of fiber and vitamin C such as grapefruit and oranges
- Sweet potatoes, which are a lower-glycemic-index alternative to white potatoes
- Berries such as blueberries, which are packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and fiber
- Tomatoes, which contain vitamin C, iron, and vitamin E
- Fish, which is high in omega-3 fatty acids
- Whole grains, which contain more essential nutrients, such as magnesium and folate, rather than processed grains like breads made with enriched wheat flour
- Nuts and seeds, including walnuts and flax seeds
- Fat-free milk and yogurt, which are good sources of calcium and vitamin D

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

TIP #4

Dining Out Requires Careful Planning

It is fine to go out to eat if you follow these helpful tips⁹:

- Before you go out, check the restaurant's website to plan ahead and determine if it has menu options that fit into your nutrition goals
- Ask for low-fat protein options whenever you can, such as fish or broiled meat with no extra butter or oil
- Eat the same portion sizes you would at home and ask for a to-go box for extra food
- Ask for substitutions to high-carb sides, such as a salad, fruit, or a double order of vegetables
- Request sauces, gravy, and salad dressing to be offered on the side
- If you want to have an alcoholic drink, try a light beer, wine spritzer, or a mixed drink that includes a calorie-free mixer like diet soda, club soda, diet tonic water, or water

Making Better Food Choices for a Healthier You

Type 2 diabetes shouldn't prevent you from enjoying a wide selection of foods. Eating well-balanced meals in the correct amounts can help you maintain your blood sugar at a healthy level.⁸



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