

HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

STAYING HEALTHY WITH DIABETES: SIMPLE STEPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

Eating healthy can keep your blood sugar in good control. Eating healthy also helps avoid weight gain. These simple steps will get you started.

Step 1. Avoid drinks with sugar, like sodas, sports drinks and juices. Instead, choose to drink:

- ▶ Water—drink 6 to 8 glasses a day
- ▶ Diet soda (like diet cola, diet root beer)
- ▶ Diet drinks (like sugar-free flavored water)
- ▶ Skim or 1% milk—up to 3 cups per day



Step 2. Eat the right-sized portions! Know how much you're eating for meals and snacks.

- ▶ Use a measuring cup.
- ▶ Meat servings at a meal should be the size of a deck of cards.
- ▶ Use small baggies to portion out your snacks.
- ▶ Eat one sandwich instead of two.
- ▶ Put food on your plate before sitting down at the table. Avoid placing foods at the dinner table and taking portions from large serving bowls.
- ▶ Always leave something over on your plate.

Step 3. Don't skip meals. Try to eat three meals each day.

- ▶ Eat breakfast!
- ▶ Avoid eating late at night.
- ▶ If you're hungry between meals, choose healthy snacks.



Now that I have diabetes, do I have to give up my favorite foods?

No! You will still be able to enjoy most of the foods you love. You will learn how different foods affect your blood sugar. You will also learn that how much you eat is important.

The unit of energy in food is called a calorie. Your body uses calories for activity and growth, and to stay healthy. You need calories to do everyday things. Your body burns more calories when you walk, play, and move. Your diabetes care team will help you decide how much energy (calories in foods and drinks) you need daily to stay healthy.

WHERE DO CALORIES COME FROM?

Calories comes from three types of food: carbohydrates (carbs), protein, and fat. Carbs have the biggest effect on your blood sugar levels.

CARBS

Carbs are in many foods, including:

- ▶ Breads
- ▶ Pastas
- ▶ Tortillas
- ▶ Biscuits
- ▶ Beans
- ▶ Starchy vegetables (corn, peas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, winter squash-like acorn and butternut)
- ▶ Cassava
- ▶ Plantains
- ▶ Taro
- ▶ Water chestnuts
- ▶ Rice
- ▶ Cereals
- ▶ Crackers
- ▶ Fruits
- ▶ Milk
- ▶ Yogurt
- ▶ Ice cream
- ▶ Sugar
- ▶ Jelly
- ▶ Honey
- ▶ Syrups
- ▶ Desserts
- ▶ Most snacks foods
- ▶ Non-starchy vegetables (broccoli, lettuce, tomatoes, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots,

Choose healthy carbs most of the time! Try these:

- ▶ Whole grain breads and cereals, like oats
- ▶ Fresh fruit or canned fruit in juice or water
- ▶ Low-fat milk and light yogurt
- ▶ Whole wheat pasta/noodles, boiled or steamed brown rice, barley, bulgur
- ▶ Baked potato with skin
- ▶ Vegetables (any kind)
- ▶ Beans (navy, lima, kidney, chili, lentils, split peas)
- ▶ Snacks like pretzels, baked chips, low-fat popcorn, animal or graham crackers, goldfish crackers, and sugar-free popsicles

Starchy Versus Non-starchy Vegetables

There are two kinds of vegetables. Starchy vegetables, like corn, potatoes, and peas, are higher in carbs. They can raise your blood sugar. Non-starchy vegetables have fewer carbs. You can enjoy them with almost no effect on your blood sugar.

Non-starchy vegetables are packed with fiber and nutrition. They help you feel full. They help you eat healthy portions at each meal.

Adding lots of oils, fats, cheese, and cream sauces adds calories. Instead, try steaming or baking these vegetables. Add them to every meal!

- | | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| ▶ Artichokes | ▶ Cabbage | ▶ Green peppers | ▶ Red peppers |
| ▶ Asparagus | ▶ Cauliflower | ▶ Iceberg (head) lettuce | ▶ Romaine lettuce |
| ▶ Avocado | ▶ Celery | ▶ Kale | ▶ Spinach |
| ▶ Bean sprouts | ▶ Cucumbers | ▶ Mesclun | ▶ Tomatoes |
| ▶ Beets | ▶ Collard greens | ▶ Mushrooms | ▶ Turnip greens |
| ▶ Bok Choy | ▶ Dark green leafy lettuce | ▶ Mustard greens | ▶ Turnips |
| ▶ Broccoli | ▶ Eggplant | ▶ Okra | ▶ Watercress |
| ▶ Brussels sprouts | ▶ Green beans | ▶ Onions | ▶ Wax beans |
| ▶ Carrots | | | ▶ Zucchini |

HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

Fiber Is a Healthy Carb

We know carbs are an important part of healthy eating. They give us energy for physical activity and proper growth. But not all carbs act the same way in our bodies.

Some carbs are digested in the body very quickly. This can cause high spikes in your blood sugars. Other carbs are digested more slowly. They contain a fiber-rich outer coating and move slower. Fiber is also called bulk or roughage. It fills you up so you feel full longer. This might help you eat less. It can also help you lose weight!

Fiber can act like a scrub brush inside your body. It helps remove extra blood fats. This can protect your heart. It makes sense to “bulk up” and “rough it up.” Choose healthy carbs with fiber!

**Quick Ways to Add Fiber to Your Meal Plan**

Include a high-fiber cereal or bread at breakfast or as an evening snack.

- ▶ Choose oatmeal or bran cereals with 4 or more grams of fiber per serving.

Switch to whole grains such as brown rice, barley, or bran.

- ▶ Try whole wheat pasta instead of regular pasta. Don't overcook the pasta.
- ▶ Add crushed bran or oats to meatloaf, breads, and muffins.

Include a serving of beans two to three times each week.

- ▶ Add kidney, pinto, black beans, or chickpeas to soups and salads.
- ▶ Substitute beans for meat in chili.

Aim for 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

- ▶ Eat fruit rather than drink juice.
- ▶ Add fruit to cereal.
- ▶ Snack on an apple or an orange between meals.
- ▶ Put cut-up carrots or celery in small baggies to take with you for snacks.
- ▶ Mix chopped broccoli or spinach into spaghetti sauce or grated carrots into muffin batter.

PROTEIN

Protein builds and repairs muscle. Protein is also good energy for your body. Choose lean and low-fat proteins.

Protein is found in the meat and dairy food groups:

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------------|
| ▶ Chicken | ▶ Pork | ▶ Beans |
| ▶ Beef | ▶ Tofu | ▶ Milk |
| ▶ Turkey | ▶ Fish | ▶ Peanut butter |
| ▶ Deer | ▶ Eggs | |
| ▶ Duck | ▶ Cheese | |

FAT

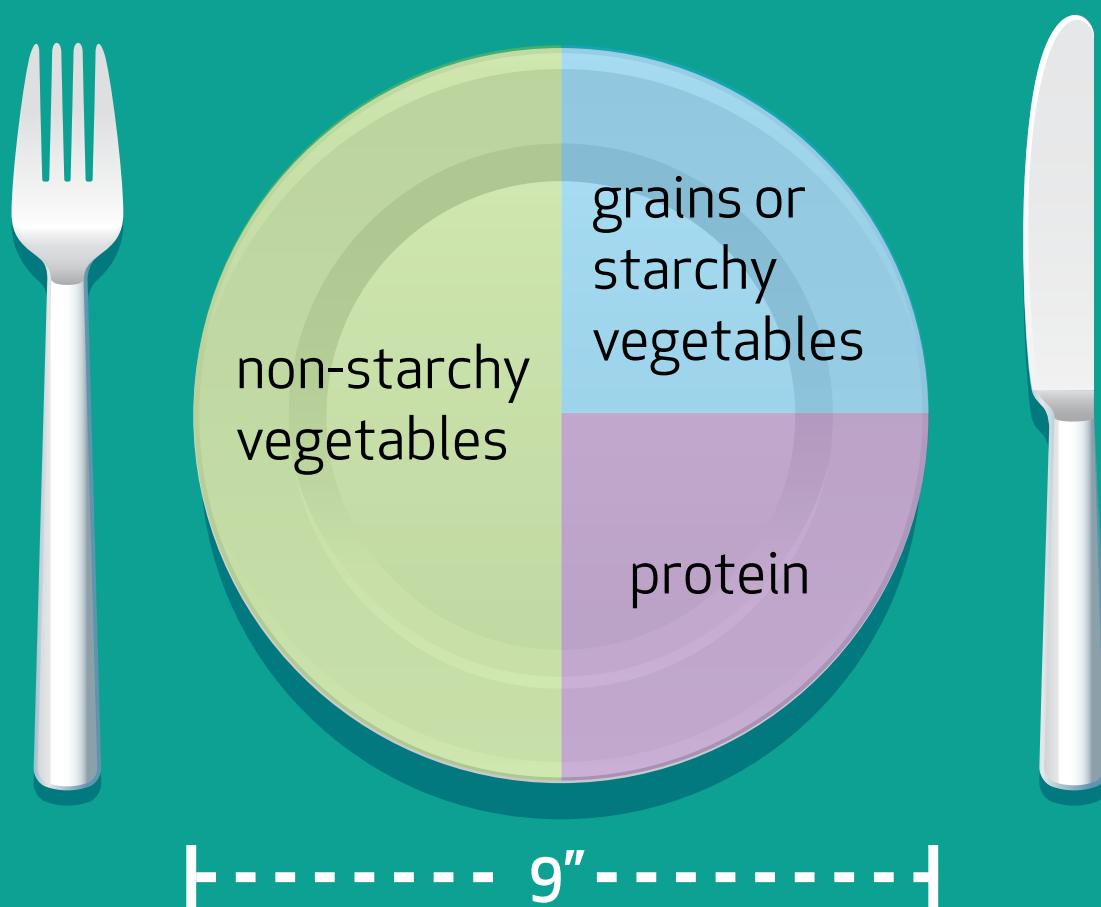
Fat helps carry vitamins to the cells. Fat is found in these foods:

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| ▶ Margarine | ▶ Salad dressings | ▶ Avocados and guacamole |
| ▶ Butter | ▶ Grease and lard, bacon, and sausages | ▶ Cheeses |
| ▶ Creams (heavy, light, sour, cream cheese) | ▶ Nuts and seeds | |
| ▶ Oils | ▶ Coconut | |

Should I watch the fat in my foods?

Yes! Fat helps food taste better and your body needs some fat every day. But too much fat adds a lot of extra calories. It can make you gain weight. Too much fat is also not healthy for your heart. Choose lower-fat foods most of the time. Work with your health care team or your dietitian to learn more about low-fat proteins and healthy fats.

See Appendix 1, Choosing Lower-Fat Foods, and Appendix 2, How to Read Food Labels.



CREATE YOUR HEALTHY PLATE

Knowing how much to eat can be tricky. One way to figure out your portion size is to use the “plate method”:

- ▶ Make sure your plate is no more than 9 inches across
- ▶ Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables
- ▶ Fill ¼ of your plate with protein
- ▶ Fill ¼ of your plate with grains or starchy vegetables
- ▶ Choose a calcium-rich food at most of your meals (low-fat milk; soy, rice, or almond milk; or yogurt)
- ▶ Make sure your plate is no more than 1 inch deep with food

What if I am still hungry after a meal?

First, eat slowly. Give your stomach enough time to tell your brain it’s full. It takes about 20 minutes.

If you’re still hungry, eat more non-starchy vegetables to help you feel satisfied. Drink water.

Brush your teeth. It makes your mouth feel good. It also might take away the hunger.

SWEETS AND TREATS

You can enjoy your favorite dessert or sweet treat once in awhile. You have to watch how much you eat and how often. Add extra physical activity on days when you have dessert. That will help you balance your blood sugar.

Tips to remember:

- ▶ Eat a smaller portion
- ▶ Share your dessert with others
- ▶ Add extra exercise on days you eat dessert

HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

Snacking can be part of a healthy diet. A healthy snack can be filling. It can help you not be overly hungry at your next meal. Add a healthy snack if you have more than 4 hours between meals. Here are some healthy snack ideas:

- ▶ 3 cups of unbuttered popcorn
- ▶ 8 oz nonfat yogurt
- ▶ 1 piece fresh fruit
- ▶ Canned fruit in "own juice"
- ▶ 1 banana
- ▶ 8-16 animal crackers
- ▶ 5 vanilla wafers
- ▶ 4-8 whole grain pretzel twists
- ▶ 2 slices of whole grain bread with about a tablespoon of jelly
- ▶ 1 low-fat granola bar
- ▶ 2 squares of graham crackers
- ▶ Half a grapefruit
- ▶ 15 grapes
- ▶ 15 baked tortilla chips with salsa
- ▶ 1 small pita stuffed with veggies
- ▶ 20 oyster crackers
- ▶ Homemade shake made with 8 oz nonfat yogurt, 1/2 cup 1% milk, 1/2 cup of fruit, 1 packet sugar substitute
- ▶ 2 slices light whole wheat bread spread with 1 tablespoon low-fat cream cheese
- ▶ 1/2 cup dry cereal in 1 cup low-fat milk or nonfat yogurt
- ▶ 1 cup berries with 1 cup nonfat yogurt
- ▶ Half a can of low-fat soup

There are lots of ways to start eating healthier. But don't try to do too much at once. Start by making small changes. Find more ways to get started with healthy changes. Visit diabetes.org/smallsteps

What are two things you can do to start eating healthier and help manage your diabetes?

1. _____
2. _____

Manage Diabetes with STAR

Managing diabetes means making choices—some easy, some hard. When faced with a decision, think STAR:

STOP before you make a decision.

THINK about your choices. Consider how they will affect you.

ACT on the better choice for your health. Small steps add up to big results!

REFLECT on your progress. Give yourself credit for healthy choices.