

Healthy Meals for Diabetes

Ask your healthcare team to help you make a meal plan that fits your needs. Your meal plan tells you when to eat your meals and snacks, what kinds of foods to eat, and how much of each food to eat. You don't have to give up all the foods you like. But you do need to follow some guidelines.

Choose healthy carbohydrates



Starches, sugars, and fiber are all types of carbohydrates. Fiber can help lower your cholesterol and triglycerides. Fiber is also healthy for your heart. You should have 20 to 35 grams of total fiber each day. Fiber-rich foods include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-grain breads and cereals • Bulgur wheat • Brown rice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-wheat pasta • Fruits and vegetables • Dry beans, and peas |
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It's important to keep track of the amount of carbohydrates you eat. This can help you keep the right balance of physical activity and medicine. The amount of carbohydrates needed will vary for each person. It depends on many things such as your health, the medicines you take, and how active you are. Your healthcare team will help you figure out the right amount of carbohydrates for you. You may start with around 45 to 60 grams of carbohydrates per meal, depending on your situation.

Here are some examples of foods containing about 15 grams of carbohydrates (1 serving of carbohydrates):

- 1/2 cup of canned or frozen fruit
- A small piece of fresh fruit (4 ounces)
- 1 slice of bread
- 1/2 cup of oatmeal
- 1/3 cup of rice

- 4 to 6 crackers
- 1/2 English muffin
- 1/2 cup of black beans
- 1/4 of a large baked potato (3 ounces)
- 2/3 cup of plain fat-free yogurt
- 1 cup of soup
- 1/2 cup of casserole
- 6 chicken nuggets
- 2-inch square brownie or cake without frosting
- 2 small cookies
- 1/2 cup of ice cream or sherbet

Choose healthy protein foods

Eating protein that is low in fat can help you control your weight. It also helps keep your heart healthy. Low-fat protein foods include:

- Fish
- Plant proteins, such as dry beans and peas, nuts, and soy products like tofu and soymilk
- Lean meat with all visible fat removed
- Poultry with the skin removed
- Low-fat or nonfat milk, cheese, and yogurt

Limit unhealthy fats and sugar

Saturated and trans fats are unhealthy for your heart. They raise LDL (bad) cholesterol. Fat is also high in calories, so it can make you gain weight. To cut down on unhealthy fats and sugar, limit these foods:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butter or margarine • Palm and palm kernel oils and coconut oil • Cream • Cheese • Bacon • Lunch meats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice cream • Sweet bakery goods such as pies, muffins, and donuts • Jams and jellies • Candy bars • Regular sodas
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How much to eat

The amount of food you eat affects your blood sugar. It also affects your weight. Your health care team will tell you how much of each type of food you should eat.

- Use measuring cups and spoons and a food scale to measure serving sizes.
- Learn what a correct serving size looks like on your plate. This will help when you are away from home and can't measure your servings.
- Eat only the number of servings given on your meal plan for each food. Don't take seconds.
- Learn to read food labels. Be sure to look at serving size, total carbohydrates, fiber, calories, sugar, and saturated and trans fats.

When to eat

Your meal plan will likely include breakfast, lunch, dinner, and some snacks.

- Try to eat your meals and snacks at about the same times each day.
- Eat *all* your meals and snacks. Skipping a meal or snack can make your blood sugar drop too low. It can also cause you to eat too much at the next meal or snack. Then your blood sugar could get too high.