

Diet and diabetes:

better eating for better control

Diet tips

Avoid sweets such as candy, pies, cakes, and soda.

Choose fresh fruits for dessert.

Watch how much starchy food (bread, pasta, rice, and potatoes) you eat. Starch turns to sugar in your body.

Choose whole-grain starches, such as brown rice or whole-wheat bread, whenever you can.

Avoid fatty foods such as fried or creamy foods.

Choose lean meats or fish and fresh vegetables.

Read food labels. Look for other names of sugar, such as corn syrup, glucose, sucrose, and fructose. If these names are at or near the beginning of the ingredient list, that food should be avoided.

Why is my diet so important?

As someone with diabetes, your main health goal is to keep your blood sugar at a steady, healthy level. Watching your diet—and losing weight if you need to—are 2 of the most important ways to reach your goal.

Even if you need insulin or other drugs to control your diabetes, eating right is very important. A healthy diet may help you control your blood sugar better with less medication. And eating right can help you lower your risk for serious problems like heart attack and stroke. These problems are more common in people with diabetes. Talk to your healthcare professional before making changes to your diet or medication.

What's a healthy diet for me?

Your healthcare professional or nutritionist will work with you to create a plan you can live with. A custom plan will help you achieve your health goals. It should also include plenty of the foods you like and should work with your schedule.

Any plan should include these 4 keys to a healthy diet to help you succeed:

The RIGHT FOODS...

The foods you choose can affect how your body works and how you feel. You should watch how much sugar you eat. Sugar comes in many different forms. These include sugary food (candy or fruit), grains (bread, pasta, and rice), and starchy vegetables (potatoes).

Many people with diabetes control their blood sugar by counting and balancing grams of carbohydrates (or “carbs”) throughout the day. This is known as carb-counting. The number of carb grams is printed on food labels. Your nutritionist can give you a target number of carb grams for each day and each meal.





Before you visit

*your healthcare
professional, use a food
diary to keep track of
what you eat.*

At the RIGHT TIMES...

Choosing the right kind of food at the right time of day is key to keeping your blood sugar in control. It is usually better to eat small amounts of food every 3 to 4 hours rather than 1 or 2 large meals each day.

In the RIGHT AMOUNTS...

Most foods will not be off limits. With your healthcare professional's OK, you may even enjoy a small slice of cake or a scoop of ice cream sometimes. But you need to learn how much of what types of foods you should eat. That means you should know how large a serving is—and how many servings you should have per day.

And in the RIGHT BALANCE

To help keep your blood sugar steady, your meals should balance small amounts of starchy foods with servings of protein and vegetables. You should try to balance the food on your plate as follows:

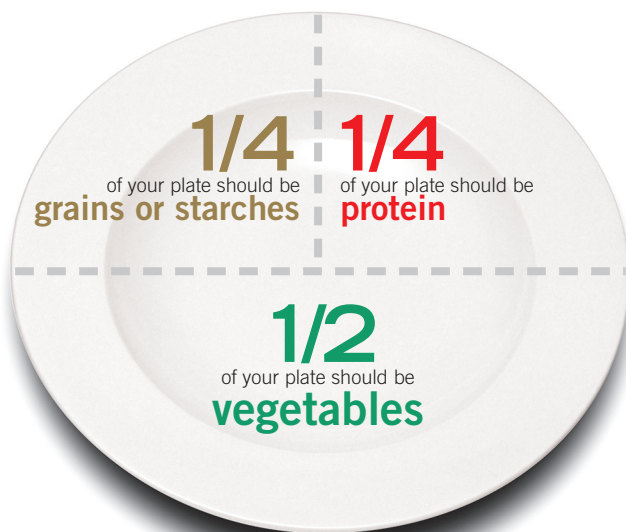
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate should be filled with grains or starches, such as rice or pasta
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate should be filled with protein, such as lean chicken or steak
- $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate should be filled with vegetables, such as broccoli, carrots, or salad

Does this mean I cannot eat the foods I like to eat?

Good news—you can make healthy diet changes and still include the foods you and your family love. Ask your healthcare professional or nutritionist for help planning meals and snacks that your whole family can enjoy. By being good to yourself, you can also help protect your family's health.

How do I get started?

The best thing you can do is schedule a visit with your healthcare professional or nutritionist. Before your visit, use a food diary to keep track of what you eat. Try to keep the diary for at least 2 weeks. This will help you work together to create a healthy diet plan that you can stick with.



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