



DIABETES MEAL PLANNING

If you have diabetes, it's important to manage your blood glucose levels by balancing medication, physical activity, and the foods and beverages you eat and drink. The registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) on your diabetes care team can help you develop an individualized meal plan based on your needs and preferences. The tips below can help, too.

FOUNDATIONS OF A HEALTHY DIABETES MEAL PLAN

- ▶ **Eat a variety of foods from each food group daily:** These include fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy.
- ▶ **Choose smart carbs.** Get most of your carbohydrates from nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products. Limit portion sizes of sweets, soft drinks, and other foods and beverages with added sugars.
- ▶ **Emphasize vegetables.** Include more non-starchy vegetables (such as leafy greens, asparagus, carrots, and broccoli), which contain fewer carbohydrates than starchy vegetables like potatoes, corn, and peas.
- ▶ **Enjoy fruit.** Fruit contains dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals and makes a satisfying dessert. Choose whole fruit more often and juice less often.

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Planning Meals

- ▶ Be consistent with your meal plan. Eat about the same amount of food, with the right balance of carbohydrates, protein, and fat, at about the same time each day. If it's difficult to follow, work with your RDN to adjust it.
- ▶ Keep a written record, or food diary, of what and how much you eat to share with your RDN. At least 2 times a month, weigh or measure your portions to make sure they're in line with your meal plan. This is especially important for carbohydrate-containing foods, including nutritious options like whole-grain pasta, bread and cereal, beans, yogurt, and milk.

Grocery Shopping and Preparing Meals

- ▶ Carefully read the Nutrition Facts label. Check the amount of carbohydrates in foods, including those labeled "sugar free," "no added sugar," or "calorie free." Some of these products may contain as many carbohydrates as regular versions. Also compare the nutrients in a serving size of similar foods. For example, compare which canned soup has less sodium or which cereal has more dietary fiber.
- ▶ Fill your cart with fruits and vegetables. They can be fresh, frozen, canned, jarred, or dried. Choose plain frozen vegetables and "reduced sodium" or "no

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- ▶ **Make at least ½ your grains whole grains.** They're rich in vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber. Brown rice, quinoa, oatmeal, shredded wheat, whole-wheat breads and pasta, and popcorn are common whole-grain foods.
- ▶ **Boost fiber-rich foods.** Fiber slows digestion and may control the rise of blood glucose levels after you eat. Beans, oatmeal, and whole-wheat bread are a few fiber-rich foods.
- ▶ **Eat less saturated fat.** Choose lean meats, skinless poultry, fish, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products.
- ▶ **Shake the salt habit.** Use less salt and more pepper, herbs, and seasoning. Eating less salt helps control high blood pressure.



- ▶ added salt” versions of canned vegetables. Look for unsweetened canned and jarred fruits, or types packed in their own juice. Choose dried fruits without added sugars.
- ▶ Go for whole-grain types of bread, cereal, rice, and pasta. Examples are 100% whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, shredded wheat, brown rice, and whole-wheat spaghetti.
- ▶ Select low-fat and fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese. Compare added sugar levels in yogurt and yogurt drinks and choose ones with lower amounts of added sugars.
- ▶ Buy lean meats (look for cuts with “loin” or “round” in the name) and skinless poultry (or remove the skin before or after cooking). Bake, broil, roast, grill, or steam instead of frying.
- ▶ Pick fatty fish like salmon, Atlantic or Pacific mackerel, tuna, and sardines for their heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Find them fresh, frozen, canned, or in pouches.
- ▶ Buy dry or canned beans, peas, and lentils. Look for reduced-sodium canned beans or rinse regular beans under cold water to reduce sodium.
- ▶ Stock up on herbs and spices to season foods instead of using salt.
- ▶ For cooking and baking, choose a liquid vegetable oil like olive, canola, corn, cottonseed safflower, soybean, or sunflower oil. Oils contain less saturated fat than solid fats like butter and lard.
- ▶ For spreads, buy soft tub, liquid, or spray margarines for less saturated fat than butter or stick margarine. Look for products with no *trans* fat by checking the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredients for words like “partially hydrogenated.”
- ▶ Pick up nutritious snacks, such as unsalted nuts, reduced-fat cheese, and fruit. Go easy on higher calorie, less nutritious foods like chips, cookies, cakes, and candy.

FOR MORE MEAL PLANNING AND SHOPPING TIPS ...

For meal planning tips, shopping lists, quick breakfast, lunch and dinner ideas, and more, visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website at www.eatright.org and the American Diabetes Association website at www.diabetes.org.
