

Control Diabetes: First Steps in Healthy Eating

**Do not worry. You do not need to eat “special foods.”
Eating with diabetes is healthy eating for all!**

What are the simple rules for eating?

- Try to eat 3 meals at about the same time each day.
- Your body can better control your blood sugar if you eat at about the same time each day.
- Do not skip meals. Never go more than 4 to 6 hours without eating.



What do you eat?

- Eat protein, starch, and a “veggie” (vegetable) at each meal to help control blood sugar.
- Do not eat more than 1 to 2 servings of starch (such as bread, potatoes, or rice) at each meal. Starches change quickly into sugar. Eating too many starches at one meal can make your blood sugar number go too high. A serving of bread is one slice, a serving of potato is one small potato, and a serving of rice is 1/3 cup.
- Choose foods high in fiber. High fiber foods such as oatmeal, whole wheat bread and dark green “veggies” help control your blood sugar. Starches with fiber do not break down into sugar as quickly.
- Cut down on portion size if you are trying to lose weight.
- Most of the fluids you drink should be drinks without sugar. Water is a great choice.
- Eat foods from all the food groups.



What are some healthy choices from each of the food groups?

Starch: Whole grains, corn, potatoes, rice, beans, bread, tortillas

“Veggies”: Fresh, frozen, or canned (rinse to lower the salt)

Fruit: Fresh, frozen or canned (without extra sugar added)

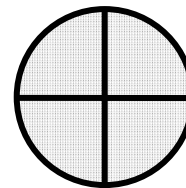
Milk: Nonfat or low-fat (1%) milk or yogurt

Protein: Lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs and low-fat cheese

Fats: Small amounts of oil, butter or salad dressing (Choose canola, peanut, or olive oil. Do not use margarine with trans-fats. Look for the words, “no trans-fats” on the food label.)

How much?

- Pretend your plate is cut into four equal parts.
 - Your protein choice should fit on one of the four parts.
 - Your starch choice should fit on one of the four parts.
 - Fill two parts of your plate with your “veggies.”



What about candy and desserts?

- It is best to eat dessert as part of your meal. When you eat a small serving of “sweets,” eat fewer servings of starch at the meal.
- Ask your diabetes teacher how to fit desserts into your meals. Any food you enjoy can fit into your meal plan.
- You can use NutraSweet[®], Equal[®] (aspartame), or Splenda[®] to sweeten your food or drinks rather than sugar.



Common Questions

Will I have to eat less?

Your doctor may have told you to lose weight. Losing weight if you are overweight can help improve your diabetes control. Sometimes a loss of only 10 to 15 pounds will help blood sugar. Do not eat fried foods. Eat small serving sizes. Just cutting back on the amount of food you eat can help you reach your weight goal.

What about fast foods?

You can eat fast foods. Plan ahead and think about what you are going to order. Get a broiled or grilled sandwich instead of a fried one. If you want to eat french fries, share a small order. Choose water, sugar free tea or diet soda for your drink.

Can I drink alcohol?

Ask your doctor if drinking is OK. Drinking alcohol may be dangerous with the medicines you take. Your blood sugar can go down, if you drink beer, wine or liquor on an empty stomach. Ask your doctor how to fit beer, wine, or liquor into your meal plan and if it is OK for you.

Do I have to measure everything I eat?

No. Here are some quick and easy tips to keep on track of portions without using a measuring cup. A serving of meat is about the size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand. Look at the pictures below to see other portion sizes.



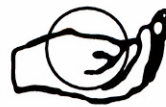
fist = 1 cup
(Such as: two servings
of pasta or oatmeal)



palm = 3 oz
(Such as: a cooked
serving of meat)



**thumb tip =
1 teaspoon**
(Such as: a serving of
mayonnaise or margarine)



**handful =
1 oz snackfood**
(Such as: 1 oz nuts)



thumb = 1 oz
(Such as: a piece
of cheese)

**Eating and taking care of your diabetes can be easy. Your whole family can help you.
Plan ahead. Shop for healthy foods. Keep portion sizes in mind.
Take a short walk after meals.**

For more information

Contact a Diabetes Teacher (nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, and other health professionals)

To find a diabetes teacher near you, call:

The American Association of Diabetes Educators toll-free at 1-800-TEAMUP4 (1-800-832-6874) or visit the website at www.aadenet.org and click on "Find an Educator."