

Eating healthfully is good for everyone, not just diabetics. One of the first things you may want to know is what you can eat to be healthy. Choosing healthy foods can help you control your blood sugar. A daily meal plan is an important part of your diabetes management, along with physical activity, blood sugar checks, and diabetic medication if it is ordered.

There is no one meal plan that works for everyone with diabetes. This guide will provide you with three ways that can help you plan your meals.

Balance your plate:

This helps you portion out your food. One fruit serving is one small fresh fruit, 2 tbs of dried fruit, or ½ cup of canned unsweetened fruit or unsweetened fruit juice. Half of your plate should have starch, grain or starchy vegetables such as corn, peas or potatoes. Use fat free low fat milk or milk products. Fill ¼ of plate with lean meat, poultry or fish. If you choose a plant based protein such as dried beans, consider the carbohydrate count as part of your total carbohydrates for the meal.

Food list for meal planning your meals

This will help you know how much of carbohydrate (starchy and sweet foods), protein, and fat you can eat each day.

There are lists of how many carbohydrates (carbs) are in foods in the book written by Warshaw & Kulkarni (1999). *Complete guide to carb counting 2nd edition*. Alexandria, VA: American Diabetes Association, 2004.

Starches – One serving) is ½ cup cooked cereal, grain or starchy vegetable (25-27 gms carbs,) 1 cup of cooked brown rice or pasta (45 grams carbs),, 1 ox of whole grain bread product(12 gms carbs), or ¾ to 1 cup of most snack foods such as air popped popcorn(6.2 gms carbs). Watch for fat in these products!

Fruits – A single serving of fruit is ½ cup of canned or fresh fruit, unsweetened fruit juice (not best choice), 1 small fresh fruit (4 oz), or 2 tbs dried fruit.

Dairy – Choose fat-free, low fat and reduced fat varieties for health but beware since they may be high in carbs. Choose foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol. One serving of dairy is a cup of fat free milk, buttermilk,

Lactaid milk, 2/3 cup of plain or low calorie yogurt (best to just mix fruit in with plain nonfat yogurt), 1 cup kefir, 1 cup fat free chocolate milk. You can also make a smoothie in your blender using soy or almond milk and raw fruits and vegetables.

Sweets (15 gms carb) – 1 ¼ inch square of brownie, 2 inch square of cake without frosting, 3 pieces of hard candy, 2 small cookies (2 ¼ inches across), 5 vanilla wafers, 1 medium plain cake donut, ½ cup flan, 1 fruit juice bar frozen 100% juice, ½ cup regular gelatin, 1 granola bar 1 oz, 1 packet of hot chocolate added to hot water, ½ cup light ice cream with no sugar added, 1 TBS jam or jelly, ¼ muffin (=1 oz) ½ cup reduced fat pudding, 1/6 of an 8 inch pie, 1 cup sports drink, 1 TBS sugar, 2 tbs light pancake syrup.

Non-starchy Vegetables (5 gms carb) – 1 serving is ½ cup cooked vegetables or vegetable juice, or one cup of raw vegetables. Non starch include Chinese spinach, beans, bean sprouts, broccoli, carrots, cabbages, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, greens, jicama, mushrooms, okra, onions, pea pods, peppers, radishes, sauerkraut (fermented type better than vinegar), spinach, squash, tomatoes, water chestnuts.

Meat and Meat Substitutes (0 carbs) –

BEST CHOICES: 2 egg whites, 1 oz lean pork, 1 ounce of cheeses with 3 grams of fat or less, fish 1 oz (broiled or baked), rib or loin chip/roast, ham, tenderloin, tuna canned in water, 1oz poultry with skin removed. **Plant Based Protein** – Beans lentils or peas ½ cup, hummus 1/3 cup, nut spreads 1 tbs, Tempeh ¼ cup, Tofu ½ cup. Count hummus as carb and beans as one starch as well.

ONCE IN A WHILE CHOICES: Medium fat meat and substitutes such as an egg, reduced fat string cheese, 1 oz of fried fish, poultry with skin or fried, ricotta cheese 2 oz, corned beef, ground beef, meat loaf, prime rib 1 oz, turkey bacon 3 slices, 1 oz processed lunch meats or Canadian bacon with 3 gms of fat or less per oz,

EAT VERY RARELY: High fat meat:, pork bacon 2 slices, regular cheese 1oz, 1 hot dog, 1 pork sparerib 1 oz, 1 oz processed lunch meats with 8 gms of fat or more.

Fats (0 gms carbs) – Unsaturated (best): 6 almonds, 3 macadamia nuts, 10 peanuts, 4 pecan halves, 6 cashews, trans fat free nut butters, 1.5 tbs, avocado, 2 tbs (1 oz). Oil, canola olive or peanut 1 tsp. Black olives 8 large,

green olives 10 large. **Polyunsaturated fats** (not as good for you): low fat margarine, 1 tbs, reduced fat mayonnaise 1 tbs, regular mayonnaise 1 tsp, corn cottonseed, flaxseed, grapeseed, safflower, soybean, sunflower oil 1 tsp, reduced fat salad dressing 2 TBS, regular 1 TBS. **Saturated fats:** bacon 1 slice, 1 tsp butter, 2 tbs half & half or cream, $\frac{3}{4}$ oz of reduced fat cream cheese. $\frac{1}{2}$ oz of regular cream cheese, reduced fat/light sour cream 3 TBS, regular sour cream 2 TBS.

“Free” Foods (eat up to three servings per day, these have 5 gms or less). Low carb foods: cabbage, raw 1.2 cup, gelatin sugar free or unflavored, gum, jam or jelly light or no sugar added 2 tsp. Salad greens, Stevia.

Modified fat foods with some carbohydrates: fat free cream cheese $\frac{1}{2}$ oz, nondairy liquid creamers 1 tbs, nondairy powdered creamers 2 tsp, BBQ sauce 2 tsp, Ketchup 1 TBS, Mustard, Dill pickles 1/5 medium, Taco sauce 1 TBS, vinegar, bouillon broth, consommé, carbonated or mineral water, club soda, coffee or tea, diet soft drinks or sugar free drink mixes, flavored extracts, garlic herbs, fresh or dried, non-stick cooking spray, spices, worcestershire sauce.

Review other foods with your dietician to come up with meal plans that can help you enjoy the foods you love with healthy substitutions.

Carbohydrate counting:

This meal plan helps you keep track of how many carbohydrates you eat and will help you control your sugars better. Your dietician can help you decide how many carbohydrates you will need. The amount is based on your age, weight, activity and diabetes medications if you are on any.

Women generally need 45-60 grams of carbs at each of three meals and 15 grams of carbs for snacks as needed. 1 carb choice = 15 grams of carbs.

Key things to remember:

Keep your food intake the same each day. Since your medicines are the same each day, it is hard to keep your sugar in control if you don't eat one day and overeat the next.

- Make at least half of the grains you eat are whole grains (not processed or made from white flour)
- Choose whole fruits and vegetables often
- Go with lean protein
- Get your calcium-rich foods
- Know your limits on fats, salt, and sugars
- Choose water instead of sugary beverages, juice “drinks” and sports drinks

Checking your blood sugar will help you see how your food choices affect your blood glucose control.

A registered dietician (RD) can help you make a meal plan that best meets your needs and lifestyle. Ask your healthcare provider, diabetes educator, hospital, or local diabetes association for names of RDs in your area who work with people that have diabetes.