



Diabetes And Meal Planning

In spite of what you might have heard, having diabetes does not mean you have to give up all the foods you enjoy. However, learning to eat healthy, satisfying meals is an important part of your treatment.

Good diabetes meal planning includes:

- Understanding how different foods and the amount eaten affect your blood sugar.
- Choosing healthy foods.
- Eating regular meals at the right times.

Choose healthy food

Good nutrition is a very important part of diabetes management. People with diabetes should work with their diabetes health care team to develop an eating plan that meets their personal food prefer-

ences while keeping blood glucose in a healthy range. By choosing nutritious foods and balancing what and how much you eat with activity level, blood sugar levels can be kept as close to normal as possible. Here are a few tips on making healthy food choices for the entire family.

- Eat lots of vegetables and some fruit. Try picking from the rainbow of colors available to add variety to your meals. Choose more non-starchy vegetables that have lots of vitamins and minerals such as spinach, carrots, broccoli or green beans with meals. Discuss with your diabetes care team how many servings of fruit you should eat each day.
- Choose whole grain foods instead of processed grain products like white bread, white rice or regular pasta. Try brown

rice with your stir-fry or whole-wheat spaghetti with your favorite pasta sauce.

- Include fish in your meals two to three times a week and choose lean meats like chicken and turkey without the skin. To prepare meats and fish with less fat, trim any visible fat and use low-fat cooking methods such as broiling, grilling, roasting, poaching or stir-frying.
- Include dried beans (like kidney or pinto beans) and lentils in your meals.
- Choose low fat dairy products such as milk, yogurt and cheese (1 percent fat or less).
- Choose liquid oils such as canola, olive or peanut oil for cooking, instead of solid fats such as butter, lard and shortening.

Remember that all fats are high in calories. If you're trying to lose weight, cut back on portion sizes of added fats.

- Choose fruit that is in-season for dessert – you'll get more flavor and pay less too! Try to cut back on high-calorie dessert and snack foods such as chips, cookies, cakes and ice cream that give you and your family little nutrition.
- Choose water and calorie-free "diet" drinks instead of regular soda, fruit punch, sweet tea and other sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Control your portion sizes. Remember that the amount of food you eat is important in getting to and staying at a healthy weight.

Understanding how different foods and amounts affect blood sugar

Starches and sugars (carbohydrates) have more effect on blood sugar than protein or fat. Carbohydrates include foods such as bread, pasta, cereal, beans, milk, fruit and fruit juices, and sweets. Keeping track of the carbohydrate foods you eat is a key factor in controlling your blood sugar. Carbohydrates have the greatest impact on your blood sugar after meals, and your blood sugar level can go too high when you eat more carbohydrates than your body can use. By keeping track of the carbohydrates you eat and spreading them throughout the day, you can help control your blood sugar.

In order to count carbohydrates, it's helpful to have a meal plan and know the average carbohydrate values of various food groups. Talk to your doctor about how many carbohydrates you should have at each meal.

Most of the carbohydrates we eat come from three food groups: starch, fruit and milk. Vegetables also contain some carbohydrates, but foods in the meat and fat groups contain very little carbohydrates. This list shows the average amount of carbohydrates in each food group per serving:

	Carbohydrate Grams
Starch	15
Fruit	15
Milk	12
Vegetable	5
Meat	0
Fat	0

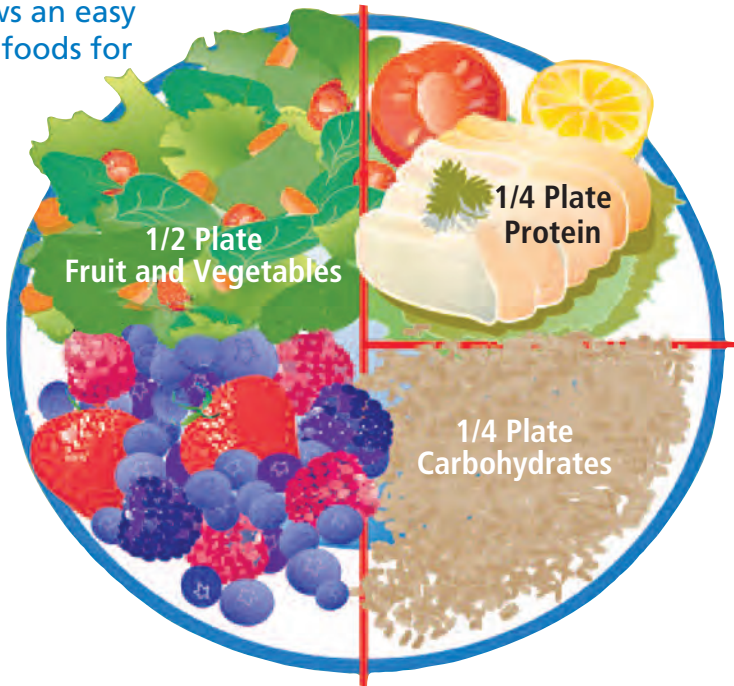
To make things easy, many people begin carbohydrate counting by rounding the carbohydrate values:

One serving of milk , starch, or fruit = 15 grams of carbohydrates or one carbohydrate serving. three servings of vegetables = 15 grams of carbohydrates. One or two servings of vegetables do not need to be counted. Each meal and snack will contain a total number of grams of carbohydrates.

Counting carbohydrates allows flexibility in your meal plan, but you can't abandon your meal plan and eat as many carbohydrates as you desire. Remember to consult your health care team before making any of the changes discussed here.

The healthy plate

This plate shows an easy way to choose foods for good health.



For help in managing your diabetes, contact our Member Care Management team at 1-800-860-2619.