

Meal Prepping for Older Adults with Diabetes

MEAL PREP 2.0

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY



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What is Diabetes?

There are two types of Diabetes; a condition that affects the way energy is made for the body. Type 1 is an autoimmune reaction stopping the production of insulin. Type 2 is the improper insulin production to keep blood sugar at normal levels.

According to the CDC, symptoms can include:

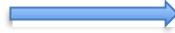
- Thirst
- Hunger
- Numb or tingling hands/feet
- Blurry vision
- Dry skin.

Meal prepping difficulties:

Preparing meals with diabetes and the symptoms above can present with challenges. For example:

Symptom:**Consequence:**

Excessive thirst or hunger



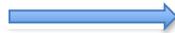
- Malnutrition
- Difficulty participating in outdoor activities or class

Numbness or tingling in hands



- Difficulty manipulating kitchen utensils
- Inability to sense extreme temperature
- Cuts or bruises can go unchecked leading to infection

Blurry vision



- Fatigue
- Difficulty manipulating kitchen utensils

Dry skin



- Can lead to cracks in skin making it harder to heal
- May lead to redness

Why it matters?

Diabetes is associated with increase prevalence in functional disabilities, depression, falls, and cognitive impairments. Studies have also found that malnutrition is highly prevalent in elderly diabetic inpatients (Vischer et al., 2010). All of this can lead to frailty, loss of independence, and low quality of life (Araki & Ito, 2009).

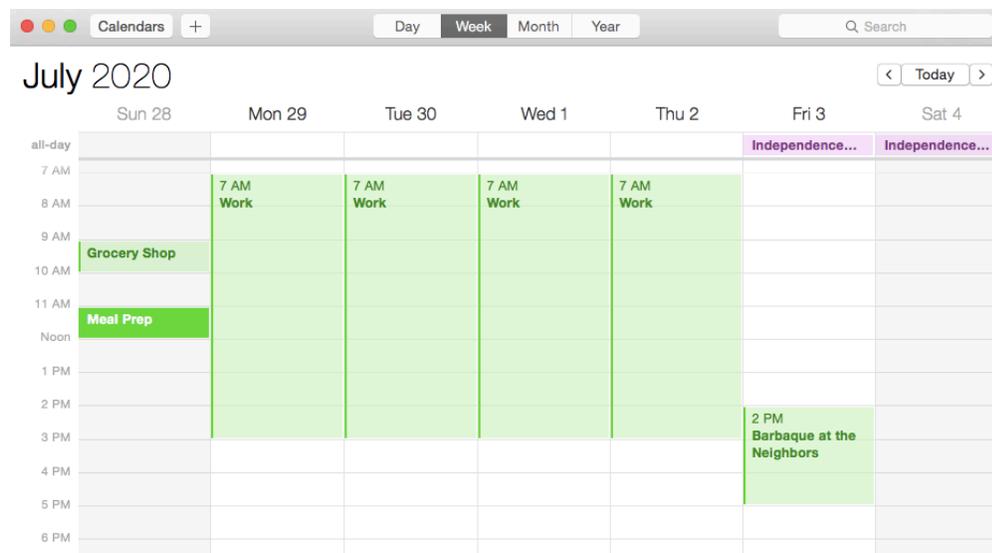
What an Occupational Therapist can do for you! (Treatments):

- **Meal Prep Schedule**

- 1. Pick a day & time to grocery shop & cook**

Schedule the best day of the week to grocery shop and meal prep. For you this could be a Saturday morning or a Sunday afternoon. Also be mindful of the time of day. Are you more fatigued in the evening? Do you have the most energy post a meal? Pick a time of day you have the most energy. Meal prepping lunch and/or dinner for the week eliminates the number of times you have to cook in a day throughout that week.

Here's an example:



*Need some inspiration? Here is a weeks worth of recipes by a Registered Dietician:

<http://www.eatingwell.com/article/290459/the-best-7-day-diabetes-meal-plan/>

- 2. Pack efficiently**

After cooking, pack your meals efficiently with utensils and in containers that are easy to manipulate. Be prepared with the proper snacks or water to help with shifting sugar levels.

Here are some reusable meal prep containers that could work for you:

<https://www.amazon.com/Evolutionize-Healthy-Meal-Prep-Containers/dp/B0128YT76S>

3. Do a regular Skin Check

Skin checks involve inspecting skin areas that may have been impacted without notice due to neuropathy or low vision. Especially while cooking and meal preparation. Inspect your hands and arms for burns, discoloration, or cuts.

- **Modify the Cooking Environment**

1. **Adjust the Lighting**

Making sure there is proper lighting in the cooking area can help low vision difficulties. Open windows or adjust blinds to eliminate glares.

2. **Use contrasting cooking utensils**

Do you have a white stovetop? A light colored counter top? Use bright or dark pots, pans, and kitchen utensils. This will make meal preparation easier with low vision.

3. **Remove Trip Hazards**

Eliminating any trip hazards in the kitchen can reduce the chances of falls due to low vision. Trip hazards could include rugs, loose carpet, pets, or clutter (Toto, 2017).

- **Assistive Technology**

1. **Cut gloves**

Link: https://www.amazon.com/NoCry-Cut-Resistant-Gloves-Performance/dp/B00MXUHHGK/ref=lp_393303011_1_4?s=hi&ie=UTF8&qid=1591903923&sr=1-4

Cut gloves can reduce your risk of sustaining harm to your hand. This one from amazon comes in different sizes! You may find it easier to only wear it on your non-dominate hand (the hand not using the sharp utensil).



2. Magnifying Apps

Link: <https://nelowvision.com/2018/03/06/top-magnification-apps-blind-visually-impaired/>

While preparing a meal, it may be difficult to read labels on cans, boxes, or bottles due to low vision. Your phone can act as a magnifier! Above is linked some of the best applications for magnifying.

3. Food Thermometer

Link: https://www.amazon.com/Taylor-Commercial-Waterproof-Digital-Thermometer/dp/B00009WE45/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=Food+Thermometer&qid=1591904689&s=hi&sr=1-2

A food thermometer can reduce the chances of burns due to neuropathy. It would allow you to check the temperature of foods and liquids before eating.



Resources:

- **Wayne State University- DEW Clinic**
Link: <https://dewclinic1.wixsite.com/home>



The Diabetes Education Wellness Clinic is a free multidisciplinary student-run clinic that provides specialized care and education resources for patients with diabetes in the Detroit community. The student multidisciplinary services include pharmacy, medicine, dietetics, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and social work.

- **Henry Ford- Diabetes Support Group**
Link: <https://www.henryford.com/about/community-health/wellness-resources/diabetes>



Patients and families can come together to learn more about diabetes, share experiences, exchange recipes, and become part of a network facing similar issues. There are also health care professionals available to offer guidance. These support groups are located throughout metro- Detroit and is free of charge!

- **Diabetes Detroit- Patient Resources**

Link: <https://www.diabetesdetroit.com/patient-resources>

This page provides new patient forms and first appointment checklists. It also gives access to helpful apps, websites, educational materials, links to medical suppliers, and assistive technology for diabetes. It also has more information on local community resources such as: Diabetics Assistance Program, Lilly Insulin Assistance, CVS Minute Clinics, and transportation resources.

- **Diabetes Health Fair- Quick Meals on a Budget**

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtEYwPN62-k>

Provided by Washington Hospital, watch Certified Diabetes Educator: Ann Mazzei instructs on how to plan, grocery shop, and put together a meal on a budget! Ms. Mazzei provides some helpful tips while cooking.

Other professionals that can help:

- **Optometrist or Ophthalmologist-** is a physician that specializes in eye care. They can help with the blurred or low vision symptoms that can be associated with diabetes.
- **Neurologist** – is a physician that specializes in brain, spinal cord, and nerve injuries. They can help with the neuropathy symptoms that can be associated with diabetes.
- **Pharmacist-** can prescribe medications and drug therapies that may aid in symptoms of diabetes.
- **Dietitian-** is an expert in addressing nutritional intake and putting together meal plans. They can aid in malnutrition that may come with diabetes.

How these solutions help YOU in occupational engagement:

These treatments and resources assist in self-care, specifically eating and drinking. An essential activity of daily living! For example, the provided treatments found more efficient, coordinated tasks and actions of eating. Particularly under the assistive technology portion where a cut glove is listed as an possible solution to eating while having symptoms of neuropathy while eating or cooking with sharp utensils. Hopefully you found some solutions that will make meal prepping and eating in your everyday life easier!

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