

# Hidden Truths About Diabetic Foods

Foods to eat & avoid



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## Introduction.

This guide was compiled by [uderika.com](https://uderika.com), a passionate group of young Nigerian healthcare providers who came together with the aim of empowering individuals with the right medical knowledge. Basically, our aim is to teach you all you need to know about your health so you can start making informed health decisions.

At [Uderika.com](https://uderika.com), we aim to share all our medical knowledge and break down complex health concepts into simple, easy and fun videos, so that, everyone can understand - *Medicine is not difficult*.

## Purpose of this guide.

The purpose of this guide is quite simple. To help everyone with diabetes understand what they need to eat and avoid. This guide is for everyone with diabetes who wants to have a better understanding of what it takes to conquer diabetes.

# Section 1

## Discover Diabetes

## Overview of how misconceptions can impact diabetes management.

There are several misconceptions about what individuals with diabetes should eat. A notable example is the belief that diabetics should avoid consuming fruits. Frankly, the first time I encountered this notion, I couldn't believe my ears. However, it became clear to me in that moment that countless people have been misinformed. The truth is, individuals with diabetes are not restricted from eating fruits; rather, their consumption is limited only by the quantity.

Allowing these misconceptions to propagate fosters an environment of fear and ignorance. It cultivates a society where those with diabetes feel compelled to adhere to special diets, often labeled as "diabetic food," which tends to be bland and uninspiring. This poses a significant problem. I can only imagine how disheartening it would be to be told to live a life devoid of carbohydrates, fruits, and anything sweet. After all, food is an integral part of life.

It is no wonder that individuals with diabetes struggle to maintain a good and healthy diet when unrealistic expectations are set for them. Moreover, these expectations often stem from misconceptions and myths. This guide aims to dispel some of these misconceptions, empowering individuals with diabetes to once again enjoy their meals.

## Understanding Diabetes.

To start, let's define diabetes. When the term diabetes is mentioned, most people immediately associate it with excess sugar. They are not entirely wrong, but that definition is incomplete.

To gain a deeper understanding of diabetes, one must pose the question: 'Why is there an excess of sugar in the bodies of individuals with diabetes?' The response to this question provides a clearer insight into the nature of diabetes, compelling one to consider its underlying cause. The straightforward answer to this question is as follows: there is an excess of sugar due to the diminished ability of the individual's body to break down sugars.

Consequently, diabetes is the accumulation of excess sugar in the body, stemming from the reduced ability of the body to break down sugar.

With this explanation, it is now easier to understand why certain misconceptions, like the idea that people with diabetes should avoid all carbohydrates and sugars, are common. If your body has excess sugar, would it not be beneficial to avoid all sugars altogether? The simple answer to this question is NO. Remember, the issue is that the body cannot break down sugar as well as it used to.

Furthermore, sugar is very important for the body as it serves as the major source of energy, enabling us to perform our daily activities such as walking, running, driving, etc. Therefore, if we need sugar but our body cannot break it down as fast or as well as it used to, a better approach is to pay attention to the quantity and type of sugar one consumes.

## Impact of nutrition on diabetes management

Imagine your body as a complex machine that needs the right fuel to function properly. Just like a car needs the right kind of fuel to run smoothly, our bodies need the right kind of food to stay healthy. Now, in the case of diabetes, the body has trouble managing the sugar in the blood.

Here's where nutrition comes in. What you eat can affect the level of sugar in your blood. Some foods, like sugary drinks and candies, can make the sugar levels go up really fast, like a roller coaster. But other foods, like whole grains, vegetables, and beans, release sugar into your blood more slowly, like a gentle stream. These foods are like the right type of fuel for your body—they help keep your blood sugar levels from getting too high or too low too quickly.

When we talk about managing diabetes, it's about finding the right balance. Imagine a scale: you want to keep both sides level. Nutrition helps you do that. Eating the right foods—like veggies, fruits, whole grains, and lean proteins—helps keep your blood sugar levels steady. It's not just about avoiding sugary stuff; it's also about choosing foods that give your body the energy it needs without causing big spikes in blood sugar.

It's like a puzzle where you're trying to fit the right pieces together. When you eat well, it's like finding the perfect pieces that keep your body healthy and your blood sugar in the right range. Plus, it's not just about what you eat; it's also about how much and when you eat. Regular meals and portion control are important too.

So, nutrition is like the secret weapon in managing diabetes. It's about choosing the right foods that help your body stay healthy and keep your blood sugar levels just where they need to be, like a well-oiled machine running smoothly!

## Section 2

# Fact vs. Fiction: Common Misconceptions

## A. Myth: "Diabetics can't eat sugar"

The myth that "Diabetics can't eat sugar" is outdated. With a basic understanding of sugar's impact, individuals with diabetes can make informed choices about their dietary habits. The Oxford Reference Online Dictionary defines sugar as any carbohydrate that dissolves in water, usually crystalline and with a sweet taste. In other words, sugars can be referred to as simplified carbohydrates. As we will explore further in this guide, sugars/carbohydrates are essential for human well-being but should be consumed in moderation, especially among those with diabetes.

The notion of eliminating all sugars may seem like the optimal approach. Some argue that a diet based solely on proteins and vegetables should be enough for providing necessary energy. While this argument holds merit, the reality is that most individuals cannot sustain such a diet. Let's face it, sugar tastes good and is present in nearly every food on the market. Therefore, most experts agree that the best approach for individuals with diabetes is to consume sugars in moderation. This approach promotes a sustainable, enjoyable, and healthy lifestyle.

## B. Myth: "All carbohydrates are bad for diabetics"

All carbohydrates are not the same, hence, they cannot all be labelled as bad. Carbohydrates are usually classified into simple and complex. Understanding the differences between simple carbohydrates and complex carbohydrates is crucial for individuals with diabetes. Simple carbohydrates, sometimes referred to as simple sugars, are those found in candy, sugary drinks, and most snacks. They are quickly absorbed by the body and can cause rapid spikes in blood sugar levels. On the other hand, complex carbohydrates, are found in more natural foods like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. They take longer to digest and have a more gradual impact on blood glucose.

Managing diabetes involves choosing foods with complex carbohydrates as they keep blood sugar levels steady, preventing dangerous spikes and crashes. Examples of complex carbohydrates include;

1. Whole Grains: Foods like brown rice, barley, oats, and whole wheat products
2. Legumes: Beans, lentils, chickpeas, and peas
3. Starchy Vegetables: Vegetables like sweet potatoes, potatoes and corn
4. Fruits: While fruits contain natural sugars, many also provide complex carbohydrates along with fiber, vitamins, and antioxidants. Examples include apples, berries, oranges, and bananas.
5. Root Vegetables: Root vegetables like carrots, beets, & whole cereals



## c. Myth: "A diabetic diet means bland and tasteless food"

I'll repeat this point: Food is life. Diabetics already have plenty to deal with—medications, blood sugar monitoring, daily exercise, and regular hospital appointments. Additionally, they must work hard to afford their medical expenses. Adding to their burdens is the misconception that they must consume bland and tasteless food, which is clearly false. For individuals with diabetes, the optimal nutritional approach is to make meals as flavorful and interesting as possible. Here are some reasons why:

1. Enjoyable meals make it easier to stick to dietary recommendations. When meals are flavorful and satisfying, individuals are more likely to follow healthy eating habits more consistently.
2. Enjoying meals that are well-balanced and flavorful can help regulate blood sugar levels. When meals contain a mix of nutrients and are portioned properly, they prevent sudden spikes or drops in blood glucose, contributing to stable control.
3. Flavorful meals can incorporate a variety of nutrient-dense foods. Including a range of vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, and whole grains ensures a diverse intake of essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber crucial for overall health.
4. Enjoyable meals can aid in weight management. When meals are satisfying, individuals are less likely to overeat or seek satisfaction through unhealthy options, contributing to weight control—a crucial factor in diabetes management.
5. Enjoyable meals contribute to mental well-being. Food is a source of pleasure and satisfaction, and when individuals can enjoy their meals, it reduces stress associated with strict dietary restrictions.
6. Enjoying meals that are flavorful and appealing can significantly enhance the quality of life for individuals managing diabetes. It allows them to derive pleasure from their food without feeling deprived or restricted.
7. Embracing enjoyable meals promotes positive eating habits. When food is enjoyable, individuals are more likely to develop healthier, sustainable eating patterns rather than feeling burdened by restrictive diets.
8. Flavorful meals encourage creativity in the kitchen. Experimenting with various spices, cooking methods, and ingredients allows for a broader spectrum of healthy options, preventing monotony in the diet.
9. Enjoying meals fosters a positive relationship with food. It helps individuals view meals as a source of nourishment and pleasure rather than solely a set of restrictions, promoting a healthier approach to eating.

10. Access to enjoyable and flavorful diabetic-friendly meals promotes long-term adherence to dietary plans. This consistency is crucial for sustained blood sugar control and overall health management.

## D. Myth: "Skipping meals helps control blood sugar"

I understand the rationale behind this myth. It may seem logical that skipping meals could force the body to use excess sugar. However, in people with diabetes, this approach doesn't work and may lead to severe complications.

When you go without food for an extended period, especially if you have diabetes, your body breaks down fat and muscle tissue to release glucose. As your body breaks down these tissues, it produces acids that enter the bloodstream. Excessive accumulation of these acids can lead to life-threatening complications. Furthermore, skipping meals can put one at risk of having low blood sugar levels, especially if they are on certain medications.

Finally, most individuals who skip meals tend to overeat at the next meal. Excessive hunger often leads to consuming larger portions or opting for less healthy food choices, which can negatively impact blood sugar levels. The best approach is to maintain regular, balanced meals.

## E. Myth: "Special diabetic foods are necessary"

This myth has lingered for years, leading many to believe that a separate aisle in the supermarket or special foods & recipe hold the key to managing diabetes. Here are some of my issues with the "special diabetic foods"

### 1. **Nutrition Labels and Ingredients:**

Many of the so-called "diabetic" foods marketed as sugar-free or low-carb may still contain hidden sugars, artificial sweeteners, or unhealthy fats to enhance taste. Hence, reading nutrition labels and understanding ingredients are more critical than relying on marketing claims.

### 2. **Cost and Accessibility:**

Specialized diabetic foods often come with a hefty price tag. Buying these "foods" may strain your budget without providing significant nutritional advantages over regular, whole & natural foods.

## Balanced Diet is Key.

I will repeat this again, managing diabetes revolves around a balanced diet rich in whole foods. You don't need special foods; what you need, is to eat nutrient-dense foods like vegetables, fruits, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats in moderate quantities.

## Section 3

# Healthy & Joyful Diabetic Diet

## Solution to a healthy diabetic diet

We want to conclude this guide by offering you simple tips on enhancing your diet. Navigating diabetic nutrition can be confusing at times, but the pieces come together beautifully when you understand the key components. Here's what you need to know regarding diabetic nutrition:

1. **Embrace Whole, Nutrient-Dense Foods:**

I repeat this again. Base your diet on whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. These nutrient powerhouses provide essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber while regulating blood sugar levels.

2. **Focus on Balanced Portions:**

Portion control is crucial. Be mindful of serving sizes to manage carbohydrate intake, as they directly impact blood sugar levels. Balancing carbohydrates with proteins and healthy fats helps stabilize blood glucose.

In my opinion, the “plate method” is the easiest solution to achieve portion control. It is easy to implement and stick to. All you need is a 9-inch circular plate and some basic knowledge about classes of food.

If you want to learn about the plate method, click the link below to get access to an amazing, simple & short article that teaches you all you need to know about the plate method.

<https://diabetes.org/food-nutrition/eating-healthy>

3. **Plan Well-Balanced Meals:**

Aim for meals that include a variety of food groups. Create balanced plates with colorful vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and healthy fats to optimize nutrition without spiking blood sugar.

4. **Prioritize Fiber-Rich Foods:**

Fiber is a superhero for diabetics! It slows digestion and absorption, preventing sudden spikes in blood sugar. Load up on legumes, whole grains, fruits, and veggies for a fiber-rich diet. With good portion control

5. **Consistency is Key:**

Establish consistent meal times and avoid long periods without eating. Consistency helps regulate blood sugar levels and prevents extreme highs or lows.

6. **Celebrate Progress, Not Perfection:**

Remember, managing diabetes through nutrition is about making sustainable, positive changes. Embrace progress and small victories along the way.

## 7. Experiment:

Everyone's diabetes is unique & that's why people perform better on certain medications while others don't. Similarly, even in individuals using the same medications, doses may differ in order to achieve similar results. That's why we recommend you experiment with different classes of food, exercise routine, different eating patterns, etc. In order to achieve this we recommend the use of a *food diary* – to help you track your progress

# Food Diary – The secret to your success

Maintaining a food diary is a powerful strategy in managing diabetes. It allows you to track your daily food intake, monitor blood sugar levels, and identify patterns that can influence your overall health. This diary serves as a personal record of your journey, providing insights into the connection between your dietary choices and your well-being.

## Why food diaries work:

- A food diary allows individuals to track their daily food intake and identify patterns in blood sugar levels.
- By relating specific foods with blood glucose readings, individuals gain insights into how different foods impact their body, helping them make informed choices.
- Recording meals creates a sense of accountability for dietary choices.
- A food diary can reveal eating behaviors that may contribute to blood sugar fluctuations.
- Sharing a food diary with healthcare professionals, such as dietitians or doctor, provides valuable information for personalized advice.
- For individuals taking medications to manage diabetes, a food diary helps establish connections between food intake and medication effectiveness.

*Note: Template to a food diary has been sent to your email.*

## ‘LEARN HOW TO CONQUER DIABETES’

I want to encourage you to take advantage of our Promo (limited offer) on our introductory course on diabetes – [Learning how to conquer diabetes](#). It is a course designed by young Nigerian doctors with the aim of teaching you all you need to know about conquering diabetes. It is fun and easy to follow.

We have a **100% money back guarantee policy** (we will refund you in FULL, if you are not satisfied with the course – *No questions asked*)

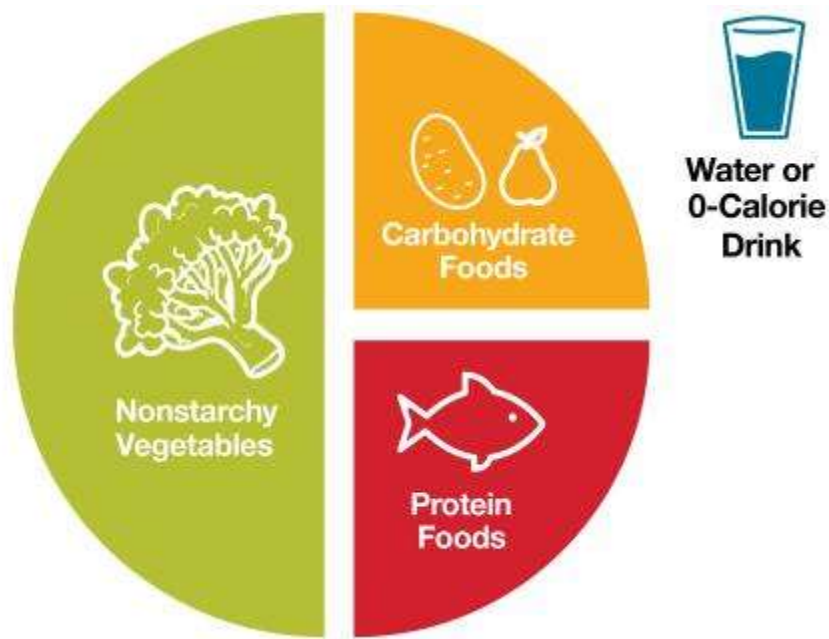
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Click [here](#) to access the course.

# The Plate Method

The plate method is a practical and visual approach to meal planning that is widely utilized in managing diabetes. Specifically designed to help individuals with diabetes make healthier food choices and control their blood sugar levels, this method simplifies the process of creating balanced and nutritious meals. The concept revolves around dividing a standard dinner plate into specific sections to guide the distribution of different food groups, promoting portion control and a well-rounded diet.



*Image gotten from; <https://diabetes.org/food-nutrition/eating-healthy>*

To learn more about the plate method, please visit; <https://diabetes.org/food-nutrition/eating-healthy>



## Conclusion

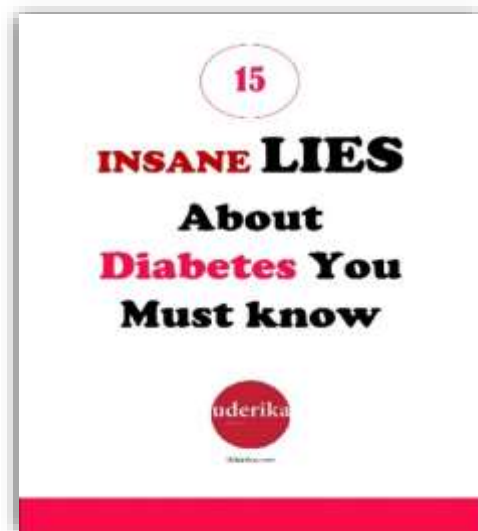
we have now come to the end of this guide. We want to thank you for taking out time to invest in your health. Furthermore, we want to encourage you to keep experimenting and exploring. Remember, food is life and it's our sincere hope you do find joy in your meals while facing this challenge life has thrown your way.

We also advise that you always keep this guide at arm's length, as it may be handy when least expected

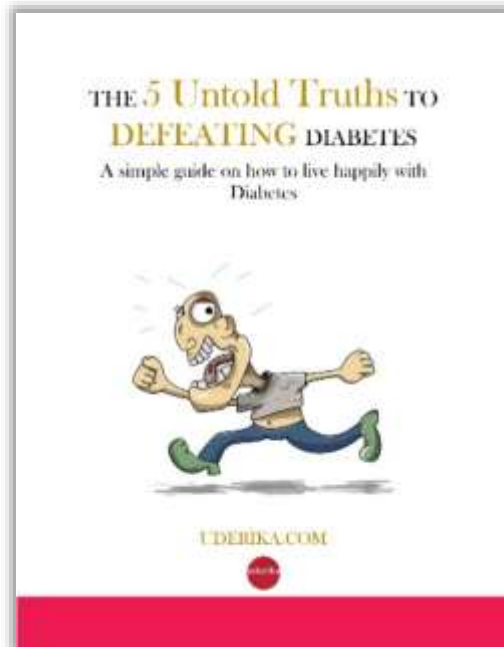
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For feedbacks and comments, please contact us at [hello@uderika.com](mailto:hello@uderika.com)

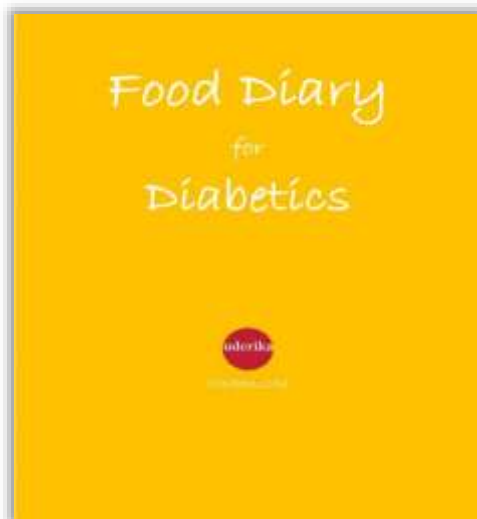
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