

Type 2 diabetes is a condition where the body does not use insulin properly, leading to high blood sugar levels.

To manage the blood sugar, the patient need to eat foods that are low in sugar and saturated fats, and high in fiber, protein, and healthy fats<sup>1</sup>.

Some examples of Filipino vegetables and fruits that can help type 2 diabetes are:

- **Bitter gourd.** Also known as ampalaya, this vegetable has a substance called momordicin, which acts like plant insulin and helps lower blood sugar levels. It also contains fiber, vitamin C, and antioxidants
- **Okra.** This vegetable is rich in soluble fiber, which slows down the digestion of carbohydrates and prevents blood sugar spikes. It also has anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetic properties.
- **Malunggay.** This leafy green vegetable is a good source of iron, calcium, vitamin C, and beta-carotene. It can help improve insulin sensitivity and reduce blood sugar levels
- **Papaya.** This fruit is low in calories and high in fiber, vitamin C, and antioxidants. It can help lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and prevent oxidative damage to the cells.
- **Guava.** This fruit is high in fiber, vitamin C, and potassium. It can help regulate blood pressure and blood sugar levels, and protect against infections.

These are some Filipino vegetables and fruits that can help type 2 diabetes. The patient can eat them in moderation and balance them with other nutritious foods

Meat and fish can be part of a healthy diet for people with type 2 diabetes, as they provide protein and healthy fats that can help regulate blood sugar and cholesterol levels. However, some types of meat and fish are better than others, and the amount and frequency of consumption also matter.

According to the American Diabetes Association, the best choices of meat and fish for people with type 2 diabetes are

- Lean meats, such as skinless chicken, turkey, and some cuts of beef and pork. These have less saturated fat and cholesterol than fatty and processed meats, which can increase the risk of heart disease and diabetes complications.
- Fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel, trout, and sardines. These are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which can lower inflammation, improve insulin sensitivity, and protect against cardiovascular problems
- Shellfish, such as shrimp, crab, lobster, scallops, and oysters. These are low in fat and calories, but high in protein and minerals, such as zinc, selenium, and iodine<sup>4</sup>.

The recommended serving size of meat and fish for people with type 2 diabetes is 3 to 4 ounces (oz), or about the size of a deck of cards

The American Heart Association suggests eating two servings of fish per week, preferably fatty fish

Some tips for preparing and eating meat and fish for people with type 2 diabetes are:

- Grill, bake, broil, or roast meat and fish, instead of frying or breading them, to reduce calories and fat.
- Trim off any visible fat from meat before cooking, and remove the skin from poultry.
- Use herbs, spices, lemon juice, vinegar, or salsa to add flavor, instead of salt, butter, or creamy sauces, which can increase sodium and fat intake.
- Limit or avoid processed meats, such as sausages, hot dogs, bacon, ham, and salami, as they are high in sodium, nitrates, and preservatives, which can raise blood pressure and damage blood vessels.
- Limit or avoid high-fat meats, such as ribs, spareribs, prime cuts of beef, and lamb, as they are high in saturated fat and cholesterol, which can worsen blood lipids and increase the risk of heart disease.