

Healthy living and diabetes



Provided as an educational resource by Merck





This booklet will cover some basic topics of diabetes. However, it is very important to visit your health care provider's office so you can discuss what your care should be.

TIP

Discuss what diabetes means to you with your health care provider.

What is diabetes?

- Diabetes is diagnosed when you have too much sugar in your blood.
- Your body's preferred source of energy is glucose, a type of sugar. You get sugar from
 1. The food you eat
 2. The sugar that is made in your liver
- A main goal of managing diabetes is to keep your blood sugar controlled.

Diabetes-friendly eating

Create a meal plan

A diabetes meal plan is a guide that tells you how much and what kinds of food you can choose to eat at meals and snack times. It is designed just for you with your health care provider and/or dietician. The right meal plan may help you control

- Your blood sugar
- Your blood pressure
- Your cholesterol numbers
- Your weight

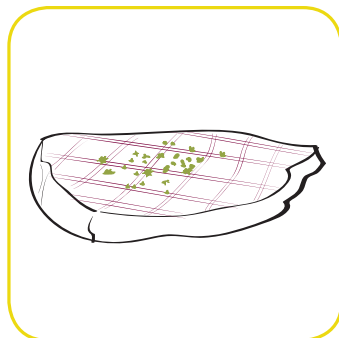


Ask your health care team:
What are some diabetes-friendly foods that you can start to include in your meals?

What to eat



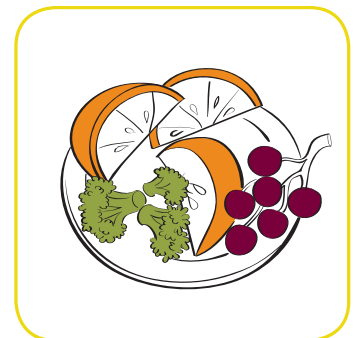
Use low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese



Grill, bake, or broil lean meat and fish



Eat more whole-grain breads and cereals



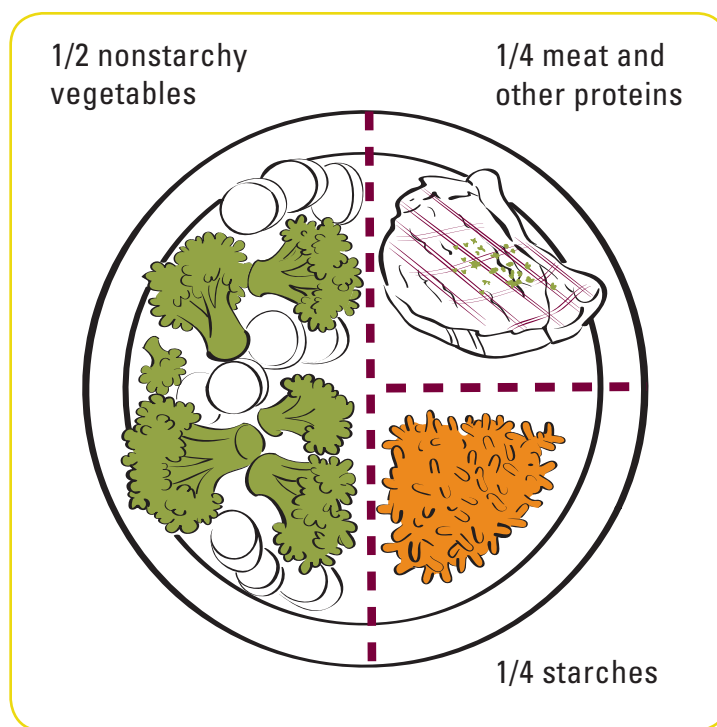
Add fruits and veggies into every meal

The Plate Method

One way to change your diet is to change the amount of food you eat. The “Plate Method” changes the portion sizes so you are getting larger portions of nonstarchy vegetables and a smaller portion of starchy foods.

Here’s how the plate method works.

1. Fill the largest section of the plate with nonstarchy vegetables, such as
 - spinach, carrots, lettuce, greens, cabbage, or bok choy
2. Fill the small sections of the plate with a starchy food, such as
 - whole-grain breads, such as rye
 - whole-grain, high-fiber cereal
 - rice, pasta, dal, or tortillas
3. Fill the other small section of the plate with meat or other proteins, such as
 - chicken or turkey without the skin
 - fish, such as tuna, salmon, or cod
 - lean cuts of beef and pork. Try cuts that end in “loin,” such as sirloin or tenderloin.



Foods to avoid

- Sugary drinks, such as soda and juice
- Fried foods

TIP

Try the plate method for your next meal. Start changing how you eat and what you eat, one meal at a time.

Carbohydrates

Keeping track of your carbohydrate intake can help control your blood sugar level.

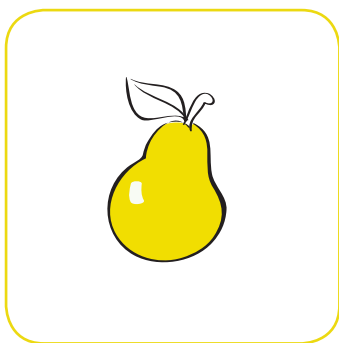
What are carbohydrates?

- Carbohydrates, also called ‘carbs,’ are found in foods such as
 - bread, rice, or pasta
 - corn and potatoes
 - fruit
 - milk
 - desserts and sweetened drinks like juice and soda

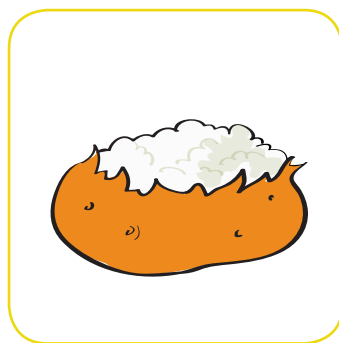
What you should know about carbs

- By keeping track of how many carbs you eat, and setting a limit for yourself, you can help keep your blood sugar levels within your target range.
- Avoid drinks like sodas and juices that have a lot of sugar in them. If the label says “No added sugar,” you still may need to avoid it.

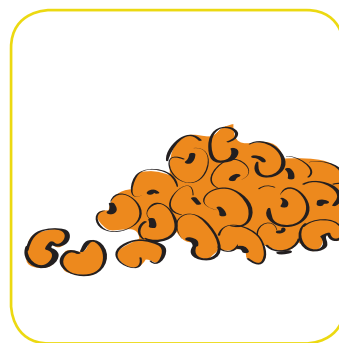
Examples of 1 serving of carbohydrates (15 grams)



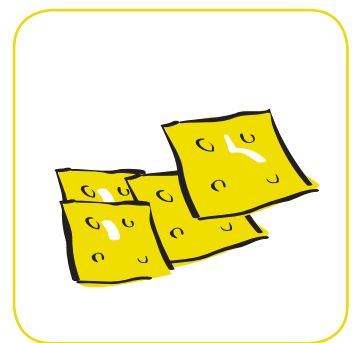
1 small piece
of fruit (4 oz)



1/4 of a large baked
potato (3 oz)



1/3 cup of pasta



4 to 6 crackers

Protein and fats

What are types of protein?

- Proteins can be found in foods such as
 - chicken or turkey
 - fish, seafood, lean cuts of beef and pork
 - tofu, eggs, or low-fat cheese

What are types of fat?

- Fats can be found in
 - butter or oil
 - fats found on animal sources such as meat
 - fried food of any kind
- Limit the amount of fat that you eat.
- What you shouldn't eat
 - Fried foods including meat, vegetables, or seafood
 - Meats high in fat like hot dogs, bacon, or spareribs



Work with a registered dietitian or a diabetes educator to find out what the right foods are for you.

Reading a nutrition label

Work with your health care team to learn how to read nutrition labels

Nutrition Facts label

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/2 cup (114 g)

Servings Per Container 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 90 Calories from Fat 30

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 3 g 5%

Saturated Fat 0 g 0%

Trans Fat 0 g 0%

Cholesterol 0 mg 0%

Sodium 300 mg 13%

Total Carbohydrate 13 g 4%

Dietary Fiber 3 g 12%

Sugars 3 g

Protein 3 g

Vitamin A 80% • Vitamin C 60%

Calcium 4% • Iron 4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65 g	80 g
Sat. Fat	Less than	20 g	25 g
Cholesterol	Less than	300 mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less than	1,500 mg	1,500 mg
Total Carbohydrate		300 g	375 g
Fiber		25 g	30 g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Talk to your health care team about your daily goals for fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, and fiber.

Serving Size

- The numbers on the label are based on a portion of food called a serving size. The servings per container will tell you how many portions are in the entire package.
- For example, in the Nutrition Facts label to the left, there are 4 servings in the whole package. This means you multiply each number by 4 to get the nutrition facts for the entire package.

Calories

- This is how many calories are in each serving.
 - The number of calories you should have for an entire day is based on your body size and how active you are.

Total Fat

- This is how much fat is in each serving. Limit the amount of fat that you eat.
 - Avoid foods with high saturated fats and trans fats.

Sodium (salt)

- This is how much salt is in a serving. Limit your salt to less than 2300 mg each day
 - Start by not adding salt to foods.

Total Carbohydrates

- This is how many carbs that are in a serving. Carbs include sugars, complex carbohydrates, and fiber.
 - Carbs are turned into sugar in your body, which affect your blood sugar level.
 - Carbs are shown in grams.

Dietary Fiber

- This is how much dietary fiber is in a serving. The recommendation is to eat about 25 grams per day for women and about 38 grams per day for men.
- Fiber is found in foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, and dried beans, such as kidney or pinto beans.

Sugars

- This is how much sugar is in a serving. Milk and fruits are some of the healthy foods you should keep in your diet, even though they contain sugar.

Protein

- This is how much protein is in a serving. Protein is found in animal and plant foods.
 - Choose lean meats and low-fat dairy foods, or meat substitutes (such as tofu or beans).

Nutrition Facts label

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1/2 cup (114 g)

Servings Per Container 4

Amount Per Serving

Calories 90 Calories from Fat 30

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 3 g **5%**

Saturated Fat 0 g **0%**

Trans Fat 0 g **0%**

Cholesterol 0 mg **0%**

Sodium 300 mg **13%**

Total Carbohydrate 13 g **4%**

Dietary Fiber 3 g **12%**

Sugars 3 g

Protein 3 g

Vitamin A 80% • Vitamin C 60%

Calcium 4% • Iron 4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

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Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

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Activity



Regular physical activity is an important part of managing your diabetes.

Regular physical activity can

- Improve blood sugar control and reduce cardiovascular risk factors
- Relieve stress
- Help you lose weight

For most people, aim for exercise for at least 150 minutes a week, spread over at least 3 days. Aerobic exercise including brisk walking, can

- Help make your bones strong
- Relieve stress
- Improve blood circulation

TIP

Ask your health care team before starting an exercise program or changing your activity level to make sure you are healthy enough for it.

Aim for exercise for at least 150 minutes a week, spread over at least 3 days.



Playing with children



Gardening



Strength training

Here are some activities to fit into your day:

- Raking or mowing the lawn
- Gardening or pulling weeds
- Walking around the neighborhood, at the mall, or walking up the stairs in a building
- Jogging, hiking, or dancing
- Playing with children or pets
- Bicycling, stationary biking, or roller skating
- Swimming or water aerobics
- Washing the car, repairing automobiles, painting, or cleaning out the garage
- Tennis, bowling, playing catch, or basketball
- Push-ups, strength training, aerobics, or yoga

TIP

Ask yourself: What are some of the ways that you can be more active?

Taking medicine

Take an active part in your treatment

- Talk to your health care team during office visits about the importance of taking your medicine. Take your medicine as recommended.
 - Stay informed about your diabetes. If you have not already done so, ask about attending a diabetes education class or talking to a diabetes educator.
 - Ask your health care team questions about your medicines.

Know what to avoid

- You should not take some medicines with others.
- You may need to avoid some vitamins, supplements, and foods. Talk to your health care team about this important topic.



Take your medicine as directed by your health care team. Always follow your health care team's advice.

TIP

Schedule a follow-up visit with your health care provider. Talk to your health care team about what you should avoid. Understand your treatment and follow your treatment plan.

Tracking medicine

Things to keep in mind

- Your health care team has prescribed a medicine to help manage your diabetes.
- Keep a list of your prescription medicines, vitamins, and supplements in your wallet.

Below is a medicine chart. Fill it out and bring it to your health care team. Include vitamin supplements and herbal remedies.

TIP

Tell each of your health care providers about all of the medicines, vitamins, and supplements that you are taking.

My current medications	How much?	How often?	Reason why I take it
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Copy this page for your wallet.

Smoking and diabetes

Smoking and diabetes are a bad mix. If you have diabetes and smoke, you can further increase your risk for long-term health problems like heart disease.

Quit smoking

Smoking can

- Damage your blood vessels. Blood vessels are the tubes that carry blood through your body.
- Raise your blood pressure.

Smoking is bad for your heart.

- Cigarette smokers are 2 to 4 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease than nonsmokers.



Quitting smoking is 1 of the most important changes you can make for your health.

Commit to quit

- 1. Find your own reasons to quit.**
Having better health is a good reason. Think about the other ways quitting may help improve your life.
- 2. Set a quit date.**
- 3. Build support.** Tell your loved ones about your promise to live a healthier life. They can help you reach your goal with their positive support. You also can look for support online. Visit smokefree.gov and lungusa.org.
- 4. Throw them away.** Throw away your cigarettes, lighters, and ashtrays. Not having these around your house can help you when you feel like smoking.
- 5. Find a buddy.** If you have a friend who smokes, ask them to quit with you. You can help each other stay focused on your goal.



Talk with your health care team about ways to quit smoking. Together, you can develop a plan to quit that can work for you.

My target quit date is: _____
(Date)

Planning for sick days

Have a plan for when you get sick.
When you get sick, you will be ready.

Tips for when you are sick

- Getting sick can make it harder to keep your blood sugar in check. Getting sick can be minor, like a head cold, or can be more serious, like the flu or pneumonia.
- Have a sick-day plan, including when to call your health care provider, how often to measure your blood sugar, which medicines to take, and how often to eat.
- If you are very sick, you may need to go to the emergency room or see health care providers who do not know you. Always tell them that you have diabetes.
- Always have the phone numbers of members of your health care team and have instructions on how to reach them after hours and on weekends and holidays.
- Check the label of over-the-counter medicines before you buy them. Some contain sugar.



Have a sick-day plan that includes how often to measure your blood sugar.

TIP

If you get sick, it is important to know what your plan is and who to call in case of an emergency.

Sick day checklist

These tips can help you manage your blood sugar even when you are sick:

- Continue taking your diabetes medicine unless your health care provider instructs you otherwise.
- Check your blood sugar level every 4 hours. Write down the results.
- Your health care provider may ask you to check your urine.
- Drink plenty of (noncaloric) liquids
- Ask your health care provider what to do if you cannot eat normally, for example, if you are not able to eat solid foods.

Call your health care provider if:

Call your health care provider right away if you have any of these symptoms:

- Throwing up for more than 6 hours
- Your blood sugar levels are too high for more than a day
- You can't think clearly

Other symptoms:

Diabetes and your emotional health

People with diabetes may have extra stress in their lives

- Dealing with the physical, mental, and emotional demands of diabetes can be overwhelming.
- Stress can lead to unhealthy behaviors, such as eating too much or smoking.
- Learn how to reduce your stress.
- Although everyone feels sad or down from time to time, people with diabetes run a greater risk of depression.



Ask your health care team about ways to get the support you need.

TIP

Getting support can help. Here are some good tips:

Find a support group.

Make friends in support groups. They may teach you new ways to cope with stress.

Find people with diabetes who are dealing with the same things.

Ask your health care provider about seeing a counselor for support.

Confidence is power

Circle the number that shows how confident you feel that you can make changes to reach your health goals. Use the scale of 1 to 10 below.

Not confident			Somewhat confident				Very confident		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I do not feel confident that I can make the changes to reach my goal.			I feel somewhat confident that I can make the changes to reach my goal.				I am confident that I can make the changes to reach my goal. I know how, and I will start today.		

Talk to your health care team about your confidence score.

Taking action

What is a goal that you have for your health?

What might stop you?

Who can you talk to about this goal?

What will you do to make this change?

