

Diet and diabetes

Healthy eating and your blood sugar

The thought of eating healthier and eating less of the foods you love can feel overwhelming. But it really means making some simple lifestyle changes that can still include many of your favorite foods.

Some of the goals of healthy eating are to help control your blood sugar (glucose), lower your cholesterol and blood pressure, and lose weight.

A healthy eating plan includes eating at around the same time each day and eating a variety of foods. By checking your blood sugar levels 2 hours after eating a meal, you can learn how different foods affect you. Over time, you will be able to predict how foods and combinations of foods affect your blood sugar levels.

Guidelines for a healthy diet

Healthy eating is an important part of your plan to help manage your diabetes. The list below from the American Diabetes Association offers some healthy eating guidelines:

Fruits and vegetables

Most fruits, like apples, oranges, bananas, and grapes, are fine to eat. Let your health care team know if you have any fruit allergies so they can leave those fruits out of your meal plan. Make sure you eat nonstarchy vegetables, such as lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, and broccoli.

Whole grains

Whole grains are grains that have not been processed, so they are healthier for you. Choose brown rice or whole wheat pasta as healthier options.



Lean meat

These are cuts of meat that contain less fat. When you eat beef or pork, choose cuts that end in “loin,” such as sirloin or tenderloin. When you eat chicken or turkey, remove the skin before cooking.

Fish and seafood

Fish and seafood are nutritious and are healthier for you than red meat. Eat them 2 or 3 times a week. Do not eat seafood, however, if you are allergic to it.

Dairy

Choose skim milk and nonfat or low-fat yogurt and cheese.

Small amounts of saturated fats and cholesterol

When cooking, use liquid oils instead of solid fats like butter, shortening, or lard. If you are trying to lose weight, limit the amount of fat you eat.

Water

Drink lots of water—it’s the healthiest thing to drink when you’re thirsty. If you want a little variety, try calorie-free drinks. Stay away from regular soda, fruit juice, and any other drinks that contain sugar.

Create your plate— practicing portion control

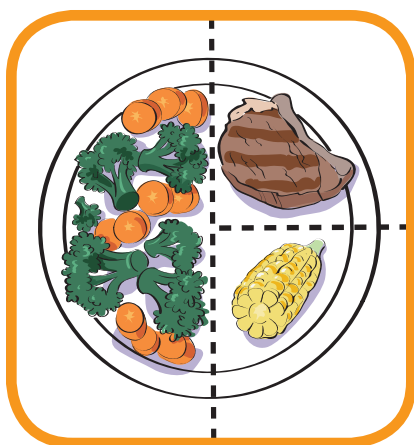
One place to begin changing your diet is to change the amount of food you eat. This is known as the “Plate Method.” It is an easy way to help manage your blood sugar levels. Just draw an imaginary line on your plate, select your foods, and enjoy your meal!

Get started!

The exact number of servings you need depends on your diabetes goals, your calorie and nutrition needs, your lifestyle, and the foods you like to eat. Talk to your nutritionist or diabetes educator and list the number of servings you should have from each of these food groups daily.

Divide the number of servings you should eat daily among the meals and snacks you eat each day.

1. Using your dinner plate, imagine a line down the middle of the plate.
2. Imagine cutting one of these halves in half again, so that you now have 3 sections on your plate, as shown in the picture below.



Portioned Plate

Fill the largest section with nonstarchy vegetables, such as

- Spinach, carrots, lettuce, greens, cabbage, bok choy
- Green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, tomatoes, mushrooms, peppers
- Salsa, onion, cucumber, beets, okra

Fill one of the small sections with starchy foods, such as

- Whole-grain breads, such as whole wheat or rye
- Whole-grain, high-fiber cereal
- Cooked cereal, such as oatmeal, grits, or cream of wheat
- Rice, pasta, dahl, or tortillas
- Cooked beans or peas
- Starchy vegetables, such as potatoes, corn, sweet potatoes, or winter squash
- Low-fat crackers or snack chips, pretzels, or fat-free popcorn

Fill the other small section with meat or meat substitutes, such as

- Chicken or turkey without the skin
- Fish, such as tuna, salmon, or cod
- Seafood, such as shrimp, clams, oysters, crab, or mussels
- Lean cuts of beef and pork, such as cuts that end in “loin”
- Tofu, eggs, or low-fat cheese