

What's To Eat?

General Goals

Two nutrition goals for diabetes are normal blood glucose (sugar) values and normal cholesterol and triglyceride levels. You can meet these goals by making better food choices and being more active. Lowering your blood glucose will help delay or prevent diabetic complications. You will also feel better.

Carbohydrates

Starches, sugar and fiber are carbohydrates. Starches and sugar will raise your blood sugar. Fiber will not. To control your blood sugar:

- Eat more high-fiber foods like whole-grain breads and cereals, dried beans and peas, vegetables, and fruits.
- Use fewer processed foods.
- Use fat-free foods carefully. Fat-free does not mean calorie-free.
- Limit juice to 4 ounces or less.
- Substitute higher-sugar foods carefully for starches in a meal.
- Check your blood glucose to see how a certain food affects it.

Fat and Cholesterol

Your fat intake depends on your calorie needs and your blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Try to eat no more than 300 milligrams of cholesterol per day.

- Use non-fat and reduced-fat dairy products.
- Keep meat, fish, and poultry servings to 3 ounces or less.
- Use small amounts of soft margarine and liquid oil instead of stick margarine, shortening, butter, fat back, or bacon.
- Do not fry foods.

Protein

Too much protein may speed-up kidney disease. Plant protein may be better for you than animal protein. Stretch meat, fish and poultry with cooked beans, peas, vegetables, fruits, grains, tofu, and other soy products.

Vitamins and Minerals

High blood pressure is common with diabetes. Eating less sodium may help lower your blood pressure:

- Don't add salt to your food.
- Read nutrition labels and choose low-sodium foods.
- Eat more fresh food and fewer convenience and restaurant foods.
- Flavor food with lemon juice, herbs, and spices.

Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables to keep your potassium and antioxidant intake high. Before taking any vitamin-mineral supplements, talk to your doctor or dietitian. High doses may be harmful.

Calories

Weight loss helps your blood glucose if you are overweight. See a dietitian to get the calorie level that is right for you. Do not go on fad diets! Slow weight loss is best. A weight control group may be helpful.

Artificial Sweeteners

The artificial sweeteners appear to be safe.

- Acidic ingredients tend to reduce bitter aftertaste.
- Baked goods may be hard to make with artificial sweeteners.
- Two sweeteners mixed together may be sweeter than one alone.
- Aspartame becomes less sweet when it is heated.
- As you replace sugar with more saccharin or acesulfame K, use less.

Alcohol

If you drink, only drink one alcoholic drink per day. Two drinks at the most. Get your doctor's OK before you drink. One drink equals:

- 12 ounces light beer
- 4 ounces dry wine
- 1 1/2 ounces hard liquor

Alcohol increases your risk for low blood glucose (hypoglycemia). To prevent problems with low blood glucose:

- Always drink with food.
- Wear visible diabetes identification.
- Drink with someone who knows you have diabetes and can treat hypoglycemia.

Questions to Answer

1. What are two things I want to do to improve my diet this week?

a. _____

b. _____

2. Do I need to see a dietitian to get a meal plan for my diabetes?
