



Diabetes is a condition in which your body cannot properly use and store food for energy. The fuel that your body needs is called glucose, a form of sugar. Glucose comes from foods such as fruit, milk, some vegetables, starchy foods and sugar.

To control your blood sugar (glucose) you will need to eat healthy foods, be active and you may need to take pills and/or insulin.

Here are some tips to help you until you see a registered dietitian.

Tips:	Reasons:
Eat three meals per day at regular times and space meals no more than six hours apart. You may benefit from a healthy snack.	Eating at regular times helps your body control blood sugar levels.
Limit sugars and sweets such as regular pop, desserts, candies, jam and honey.	The more sugar you eat, the higher your blood sugar will be. Artificial sweeteners can be useful substitutes.
Limit the amount of high-fat food you eat such as fried foods, samosas, pakoras, mathiyai, and cookies.	High-fat foods may cause you to gain weight. A healthy weight helps with blood sugar control and is healthier for your heart.
Eat more high-fibre foods such as whole grain rotis, chapati, breads, and cereals; lentils, beans and peas [dhal], brown rice, vegetables and fruits.	Foods high in fibre may help you feel full and may lower blood sugar and cholesterol levels.
If you are thirsty, drink water.	Drinking regular pop and fruit juice will raise your blood sugar.
Add physical activity to your life.	Regular physical activity will improve your blood sugar control.
Limit alcohol consumption.	Alcohol can affect blood sugar levels and cause you to gain weight.

Plan for healthy eating



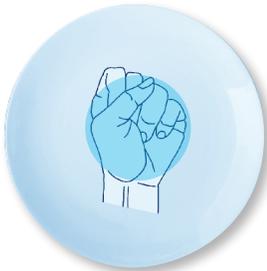
Photo courtesy of www.Thelsmaili.org/nutrition, adapted from *Healthy Indian Cooking for Diabetes* by Azmina Govindji

- Eat more vegetables (Sabji/salad - not potatoes). These are very high in nutrients and low in calories.
- Choose lean animal proteins such as fish, chicken, lean meats, low-fat cheese, paneer, or eggs. Select more vegetable protein like tofu and dahl.
- Select plant oils such as olive and canola, and nuts instead of animal fats and coconut oil.
- Eat small portions of grains and starches including whole grain roti, chapati, breads and cereals; rice (brown, basmati, parboiled), noodles, or potatoes at each meal.
- Have plain yogurt and a piece of fruit to complete your meal.

It's natural to have questions about what food to eat. A registered dietitian can help you include your favourite foods in a personalized meal plan.

Handy portion guide

Your hands can be very useful in estimating appropriate portions. When planning a meal, use the following portion sizes as a guide:



Grains and starches*/ Fruits*

Choose an amount the size of your fist for grains or starches, or fruit.



Vegetables*

Choose as much as you can hold in both hands. Choose brightly coloured vegetables (e.g., green or yellow beans, broccoli).



Meat and alternatives*

Choose an amount the size of the palm of your hand and the thickness of your little finger.



Fat*

Limit fat to an amount the size of the tip of your thumb.

Milk and alternatives*

Drink up to 1 cup (250 mL) of low-fat milk with a meal.

* Food group names taken from *Beyond the Basics: Meal Planning for Healthy Eating, Diabetes Prevention and Management*.
© Canadian Diabetes Association, 2014.

- Diabetes Canada recommends that all people with diabetes should receive advice on nutrition from a registered dietitian. Consider learning about carbohydrate counting, and different types of eating patterns (e.g. Mediterranean style, Nordic style, DASH, or vegetarian diet) at your appointment.
- Be sure to eat breakfast. It provides a good start to the day.
- Try to prepare more of your meals at home and use whole, unprocessed ingredients.
- Eat together as a family more often to model healthy eating behaviours to children and teenagers.
- If you are planning on fasting, talk to your health-care team 1 to 2 months in advance.

Sample meal plan

For smaller appetites

Breakfast:

Whole grain toast (2 slices)
 1 orange
 1 egg
 Tea or coffee - no sugar

Lunch:

2 Whole wheat chapati (6", 15 cm each)
 Lean lamb (2 oz, 60 g)
 Green salad (1 tsp, 5 mL low-calorie dressing)
 Sabji (no potato)
 1 small banana
 Low-fat plain yogurt (¾ cup, 175 mL)
 Tea or coffee - no sugar

Dinner:

Rice, basmati/brown (2/3 cup, 150 mL)
 Dhal (½ cup, 125 mL)
 Green salad
 Saag with tofu (1 cup, 250 mL)
 Cantaloupe (1 cup, 250 mL)
 Chai tea - no sugar, with low-fat milk (½ cup, 125 mL)

Evening Snack:

Low-fat cheese (1 oz, 30 g)
 Whole grain crackers (4)

Increase your physical activity

- Build time for physical activity into your daily routine.
- Try to be active most days of the week.
- Walk whenever you can, instead of taking the car.
- Start slowly and gradually increase the amount of effort; for instance, progress from strolling to brisk walking.
- Make family activities active; try swimming or skating instead of watching TV or a movie.
- Try new activities; learn to dance, play basketball, or ride a bike.
- Enjoy your improved sense of health and well-being.



Follow a healthy lifestyle

- Have at least 3 out of the 4 key food groups at each meal from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*:
 - vegetables and fruit
 - grain products
 - milk and alternatives
 - meat and alternatives
- A vegetarian diet can also be a healthy diet.
- Have portion sizes that will help you reach or maintain a healthy body weight.
- Include high-fibre foods such as whole grain breads, cereals, and pastas, fresh fruits, vegetables and legumes.
- Make lower fat choices (e.g. use skim milk and lean ground beef, trim fat on meat, chicken etc., and use small amounts of added fat such as oil and salad dressings).
- Healthy eating habits should be built around a healthy lifestyle – keep active every day.

Sample meal plan

For bigger appetites

Breakfast:

2 Whole wheat chapati (6", 15 cm each)
Vegetable curry
Low-fat plain yogurt (¾ cup, 175 mL)
Blueberries (1 cup, 250 mL)
Tea or coffee - no sugar

Lunch:

Rice, basmati/brown (1 cup, 250 mL)
Lean chicken (2 oz, 60 g)
Green salad (1 tsp, 5 mL low-calorie dressing)
Saag
½ Medium mango
Tea or coffee

Afternoon Snack:

1 medium apple or small banana

Dinner:

2 Whole wheat chapati (6", 15 cm each)
Dhal (1 cup, 250 mL)
Green salad
Sabji (no potato) with tofu (1 oz, 30 g)
Low-fat plain yogurt (1/3 cup, 75 mL)
1 Medium peach
Chai tea - no sugar, with low-fat milk (½ cup, 125 mL)

Evening Snack:

Hummus (2 tbsp, 30 mL)
Whole grain crackers (4)

Related articles: *Physical activity and diabetes, Glycemic index, Eating away from home, Alcohol and diabetes, Managing weight and diabetes*

**DIABETES
CANADA**

diabetes.ca | 1-800 BANTING (226-8464) | info@diabetes.ca

Diabetes Canada is making the invisible epidemic of diabetes visible and urgent. Eleven million Canadians have diabetes or prediabetes. Now is the time to End Diabetes - its health impacts as well as the blame, shame and misinformation associated with it. Diabetes Canada partners with Canadians to End Diabetes through education and support services, resources for health-care professionals, advocacy to governments, schools and workplaces, and, funding research to improve treatments and find a cure.

This document reflects the 2018 Diabetes Canada Clinical Practice Guidelines © 2018 The Canadian Diabetes Association. The Canadian Diabetes Association is the registered owner of the name Diabetes Canada. 511015 05/18