

Living Healthy with Diabetes

Healthful eating

Healthful eating means eating well-balanced meals and snacks at regular times.

- Well-balanced meals include a variety of healthy foods from different food groups, like grains, proteins, vegetables, fruit and milk.
- Space your meals during the day. Try to eat a meal every 4 to 5 hours.
- If you wish, you may have 1 or 2 small snacks between meals. Snacks should be good for you (nutritious). They also should be lower in calories than a meal. (For example: fat-free yogurt, ½ cup fruit, 3 cups popcorn, ¼ cup nuts). Ask your dietitian about healthful snacks.
- **Do not skip meals.**

You can eat all kinds of foods. (Nothing is forbidden.) But it's important to know which foods most affect your blood glucose.

- Three main nutrients give the body energy (calories):
 - Carbohydrate
 - Protein
 - Fat

- Only foods with carbohydrate will raise blood glucose. These foods include breads, pasta, cereals, rice, starches, fruits, milk, yogurt, sweets and desserts.
- **Do not avoid carbohydrate.** Eating the right amount of carbohydrate at meals and snacks will help you keep glucose in a healthy range.
- Check your blood glucose 2 hours after the start of a meal to see how food choices affect it.

Healthy eating at a glance

- Pay attention to portion sizes.
- Eat a variety of healthy foods every day.
- Choose foods high in nutrition:
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Beans and legumes
 - Whole grains
 - Heart-healthy fats
 - Lean meats and proteins
 - Foods without added salt (sodium), sugars and fat

Manage your weight

Managing weight is not only about how much you eat, but also about **what** you eat.

- Eat smaller portions.
- Eat less sugar.
- Eat less of the high-fat foods.
 - Eat smaller portions of healthy fats such as nuts, avocado and olives.
 - Limit fried foods, fatty meats (bacon, sausage, hot dogs, cold cuts), butter, salad dressings, cream, gravy, chips, baked goods, whole milk, ice cream, pizza, fast food and hard cheeses.
- Choose high-fiber foods such as veggies, fruits and whole-grain breads and cereals.
 - These foods help you to feel more satisfied with your meal or snack. They're full of nutrients.
- Eat mindfully
 - Listen to your body's signals for hunger. Eat when you feel hungry and stop when you start to feel full.
 - Avoid eating when bored, sad or upset.

Physical activity

Activity can help you manage your glucose levels. The American Diabetes Association recommends 150 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic activity per week, spread over at least 3 days a week. Add to that strength training 2 or 3 days a week (lifting weights, resistance bands). Spend less time sitting down.

Talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program. This is very important if **any** of these facts are true for you:

- You're over age 35.
- You've had type 1 diabetes for more than 15 years.
- You've had type 2 diabetes for more than 10 years.
- You have a history of heart or artery disease.
- You have risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol or being overweight.
- You have any kind of nerve damage (neuropathy).
- You have eye disease (retinopathy).
- You have kidney disease.
- You have a history of foot ulcers.