

Just *the* Basics

Arabic Version



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 glucose you will need to eat healthy foods, be active and you may need to take pills and/or insulin.

Tips for healthy eating, diabetes prevention and management.

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

TIPS

Eat three meals per day at regular times and space meals no more than six hours apart. You may benefit from a healthy snack.

Limit sugars and sweets, such as Arabic pastries and desserts (e.g., Helou Al Arabi, Knaffe...), candies, jam and honey.

Limit the amount of high-fat foods you eat, such as fried foods, chips and pastries.

Eat more high-fibre foods, such as whole grain breads and cereals, lentils, dried beans and peas, brown rice, vegetables and fruits.

If you are thirsty, drink water.

Add physical activity to your life.

REASONS

Eating at regular times helps your body control blood glucose levels.

The more sugar you eat, the higher your blood glucose will be. Artificial sweeteners, used in moderation, can be a good replacement.

High-fat foods may cause you to gain weight. A healthy weight helps with blood glucose control and is healthier for your heart.

Foods high in fibre may help you feel full and may lower blood glucose and cholesterol levels.

Drinking regular pop, fruit juice and syrup-based drinks (e.g., Qamar el-din, Jellab...) will raise your blood glucose.

Regular physical activity will improve your blood glucose control.

Plan *for* healthy eating



Photo courtesy of Coussa, A.

- Choose starchy foods such as whole grain breads and cereals, rice or potatoes at every meal. Starchy foods are broken down into glucose, which your body needs for energy.
- Eat more vegetables and green salads. These are very high in nutrients and low in calories.
- Include food sources of proteins at each of your meals, such as: fish, chicken, lean meats, eggs, legumes (chickpeas, lentils, etc) and low-fat cheese.
- Have a glass of low-fat milk or yogurt and a piece of fruit to complete your meal.

- Use small amount of fats (2 to 3 Tbsp per day), such as canola and olive oil. Limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening.
- Alcohol can affect your blood glucose levels and cause you to gain weight. Talk to your healthcare professional about whether you can include alcohol in your meal plan and how much is safe

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.

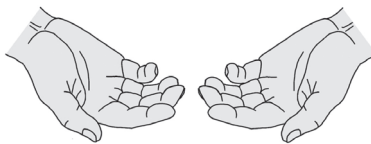
Handy portion guide

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



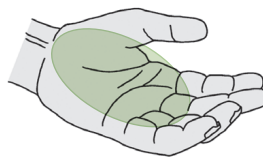
FRUITS*/GRAINS & STARCHES*:

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



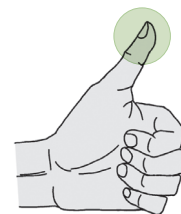
VEGETABLES*:

Choose as much as you can hold in both hands.



MEAT & ALTERNATIVES (PROTEIN)*:

Choose an amount that does not exceed the size of the palm of your hand and the thickness of your little finger.



FATS*:

Limit fats to no more than the size of the tip of your thumb.

MILK & ALTERNATIVES*: Drink up to 250 mL (8 oz) of low-fat milk or 3/4 cup of yogurt (175 mL) with a meal.

* Food group names taken from *Beyond the Basics: Meal Planning for Healthy Eating, Diabetes Prevention and Management* © Canadian Diabetes Association, 2005. Please refer to this resource for more details on meal planning.

Increase *your* physical activity

- Make time for physical activity into your daily routine.
- Try to be active most days of the week. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.
- Walk and take the stairs whenever you can.
- Start slowly and gradually increase the intensity of the activity. For instance, progress from slow to fast walking.
- Make family time an active time; play your favorite sport or walk the dog instead of watching TV or movies.
- Try new activities: learn to dance, ride a bike, do yoga or engage in an aerobic class.
- Stress has a big impact on your health, by making your blood glucose levels higher and your quality of life poorer. Physical activity of any sort helps reduce your stress levels. Enjoy doing your favorite activities!

- The Canadian Diabetes Association recommends that all people with diabetes receive advice on nutrition from a registered dietitian.
- Good management of diabetes includes healthy eating, staying active and taking required medication.
- Be sure to eat breakfast. It provides a good start to the day.

Sample meal plan

FOR SMALLER APPETITES

Breakfast:

- 1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk
- 60 g (2oz) low-fat cheese (e.g. Halloumi, Akkawi or Mshalale) Or 3 Tbsp low-fat plain yogurt (Labneh)
- 1 small whole grain pita
- Vegetables (tomatoes, cucumber)
- 1 orange
- Optional: tea or coffee (no sugar)



Lunch:

- 1 cup Mujadara (½ cup lentils + ½ cup rice)
- Salad (tomato & cucumber) with lemon and 1 tsp of olive oil
- 1 pear
- Optional: tea or coffee (no sugar)



Dinner:

- 4 medium sized vegetarian stuffed vine leaves marinated in oil
- ¾ cup (175 mL) low-fat yogurt with cucumber and mint
- 60 g (2 oz) grilled chicken brochette with vegetables

Evening Snack:

- 1 apple and 10 almonds



*Use herbs and spices to replace salt and sugar

Follow a healthy lifestyle

- At each meal, have at least 3 out of the 4 food groups from Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide:
 - Vegetables and Fruit
 - Grain Products
 - Milk and Alternatives
 - Meat and Alternatives
- Include high-fibre foods such as whole grain breads, cereals, pastas, fresh fruits, vegetables and legumes.
- Have at least two servings of fish per week.
- 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).

Sample meal plan

FOR BIGGER APPETITES

Breakfast:

1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk
2 eggs with onions and tomatoes
1 small whole grain pita
1 orange
Optional: tea or coffee (no sugar)

Lunch:

3 medium size stuffed zucchini
Salad (tomato, lettuce & cucumber) with lemon and 1 tsp of olive oil
2 clementine
Optional: tea or coffee (no sugar)



Dinner:

Green salad with low-fat salad dressing
120 g (4 oz) lean meat “Kefta in the oven” with tomato sauce, onions and 1 medium size potato
½ whole grain pita
¾ cup (175 mL) low-fat yogurt
1 pear



Evening Snack:

4 Tbsp hummus + 1 whole grain toast
Or 1 cup (250 mL) low-fat milk + 1 medium size banana

*Use herbs and spices to replace salt and sugar

Eating behaviour

- By starting your meal with salad or vegetables, you will tend to eat less bread.
- Remember to drink plenty of water throughout the day.
- Be aware of portion sizes when eating energy- dense foods, such as nuts and seeds. One portion of fat is equivalent to 10-15 almonds or pistachios, or ¼ cup of seeds.
- Aim for no more than 2 choices of appetizers (Mezze) at a time. Try choosing plant-based options such as, tabouleh, fatoush or hummus.

Across the country, the Canadian Diabetes Association is leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthy lives while we work to find a cure. Our community-based network of supporters help us provide education and services to people living with diabetes, advocate for our cause, break ground towards a cure and translate research into practical applications.

*This document reflects the 2013 Canadian Diabetes Association Clinical Practice Guidelines. ©2015 Copyright

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