

Basic Diabetes Meal Plan

Diabetes meal planning starts with eating a well-balanced diet that includes carbohydrates (carbs), protein, and fat. These nutrients turn into sugar (glucose), which gives energy. Carbs (found in starches, fruit, vegetables, dairy foods, and sweets) raise blood glucose more than the other nutrients. Eating too many carbs can raise blood glucose levels, but you should not cut out these foods. Eating too few carbs may cause your blood glucose to go too low. Eating a moderate amount of carbs at each meal, with a balanced intake of protein and fat, will help your blood glucose stay in a healthy range. Here are some tips to get you started. Your dietitian will give you more specific information when you meet with him or her.

- **Limit your intake of high-sugar foods to 2 or 3 times a week or less. These include:**
 - cakes (frosted, layer, plain), pies, and cookies
 - candy (hard tack, chocolate, nougats, etc.)
 - jelly, jam, and preserves
 - table sugar, honey, molasses, and syrup
 - regular ice cream, sherbet, regular and frozen yogurt, fruit ices, and Popsicles
 - regular soft drinks, fruit drinks (canned or concentrated), and drink mixes with sugar added
 - milkshakes, chocolate milk, hot cocoa mix
 - sugar coated cereals, granola, breakfast/snack bars
 - canned fruits with heavy syrup, dried fruit, fruit roll-ups, candied fruit
 - iced sweet breads, coffee cakes, breakfast rolls, and donuts
- **Eat 3 well-balanced meals a day and a small snack at night.** Each meal or snack should contain protein. When planning meals, select a variety of foods from each food group, and watch your portion sizes.
- **Increase your fiber intake.** Choose wholegrain breads and cereals. Eat plenty of vegetables, and choose whole fruits instead of fruit juices. When you look at food labels, look for products that contain at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.
- **Do not skip meals.** Try to eat around the same time each day. Meals are best spaced 4 to 5 hours apart.
- **Reduce fat intake by baking, broiling, and grilling your foods,** and using some low-fat foods. Be careful when selecting low-fat foods; many are high in sugar.
- **Stay active.** Your blood glucose level will improve if you keep active. Check with your doctor before beginning an exercise or walking program.
- **Lose weight if you are overweight.** Losing weight gradually, even a small amount of weight (5 to 10 lbs.) can help improve your blood glucose level.

Read “Nutrition Facts” labels. Sugar free products may contain the same amount of calories as regular products and still contain carbohydrates.

Carbohydrates

	Recommended Foods	Recommended Number of Servings
Starches (1 serving = 80 calories and 15 grams carbohydrates) 1 serving = <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 slice of bread ▪ 1 small roll or muffin ▪ 1/2 bun ▪ 1/2 small bagel or English muffin ▪ 1/3 cup of pasta or rice ▪ 1/2 cup hot or ready-to-eat cereal ▪ 1/2 cup starchy vegetables ▪ 4 large or 6 small crackers ▪ 1 cup of soup ▪ 3 cups of popcorn ▪ 3 graham cracker squares ▪ 3/4 cup unsweetened, dry cereal ▪ 3 cups "lite" or low-fat popcorn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ whole-grain breads, rolls, muffins, or bagels ▪ pasta, rice, noodles ▪ oatmeal and bran cereals ▪ starchy vegetables (peas, corn, lima beans, and potatoes) ▪ dried beans (kidney beans, lentils) ▪ soup (broth and cream style) ▪ popcorn, pretzels, graham crackers, and vanilla wafers 	3- 4 servings per meal (no more than 8-12 per day)

Fruits

	Recommended Foods	Recommended Number of Servings
(1 serving = 60 calories and 15 grams carbohydrates) 1 serving = <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1/2 cup water-packed fruit ▪ 1 small piece of fruit (size of a tennis ball) ▪ 1/2 cup of fruit juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fresh fruit ▪ unsweetened fruit juice ▪ canned fruit in natural juice or water 	3 -4 servings per day

Milk/Dairy

	Recommended Foods	Recommended Number of Servings
(1 serving 90-150 calories and 12 grams carbohydrates) 1 serving = <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 cup milk ▪ 6 ounces yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fat-free, 1 percent or 2 percent milk ▪ low-fat buttermilk ▪ lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk ▪ soy milk ▪ "lite" yogurt 	2- 3 servings per day

Vegetables (non-starchy)

	Recommended Foods	Recommended Number of Servings
(1 serving = 25 calories and 5 grams carbohydrates) 1 serving = <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1/2 cup cooked vegetables ▪ 1 cup raw vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ any cooked or raw vegetables, except starchy vegetables (see starch list) 	2- 3 servings per day

Sweets/Desserts/Other Carbs

	Recommended Foods	Recommended Number of Servings
Sweets/Desserts/Other Carbs (1 serving = 15 grams carbohydrates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1/2 cup sugar-free pudding, custard, ice cream, or sherbet ▪ 2 small cookies ▪ 1 frozen juice bar ▪ 3 gingersnaps or small sugar-free cookies ▪ 1/4 cup fat-free salad dressing 	Limit, and substitute for 1 serving, starch, fruit, or dairy

Proteins

	Recommended Foods	Recommended Number of Servings
Meats/Meat Substitutes (1 serving = 35 to 100 calories per ounce, grams protein, and 0 carbohydrates) 1 serving = <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 oz. meat, 1 egg ▪ 1/4 cup tuna fish, or cottage cheese ▪ 1 slice of cheese ▪ 1 tablespoon of peanut butter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ meat, poultry, fish, eggs, egg substitutes ▪ low-fat cheese and cottage cheese ▪ peanut butter, tofu, dried beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically, 0-1 serving (1 oz.) at breakfast is recommended ▪ Typically, 3 servings (3 oz.) at lunch and dinner ▪ 3 oz. of meat is roughly equal to the size of a deck of cards

Fats

	Recommended Foods	Recommended Number of Servings
(1 serving = 45 calories, 5 grams of fat, and 0 carbohydrates) 1 serving = <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 tablespoon reduced-fat dressing ▪ 6-10 nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ margarine, oil, salad dressing, mayonnaise ▪ cream cheese, sour cream, gravy ▪ peanuts, almonds, walnuts, pecans 	1 -2 servings per meal
Unlimited Foods	Limited Foods	Recommended Number of Servings
diet soda, diet club soda, sugar-free Popsicles, artificial sweeteners, sugar-free drink mixes, sugar-free Jell-O, regular or decaf coffee and tea	(1 piece, 1 tablespoon) sugar-free hard candy, low-sugar jelly, light syrup, sugar-free gum, whipped topping, fat-free cream cheese (1 cup) raw vegetables	3 servings per day

Sample Meal Plan

Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1/2 grapefruit (1 carbohydrate) ▪ 1/2 cup oatmeal (1 carbohydrate) ▪ 1 slice wheat toast (1 carbohydrate) ▪ 1 scrambled egg or egg substitute (1 meat) ▪ 1 teaspoon margarine (1 fat) and sugar-free jelly ▪ 1 cup milk (skim, 1 percent, or 2 percent) (1 carbohydrate) ▪ coffee or tea and artificial sweetener
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ turkey sandwich [2 slices whole wheat bread (2 carbohydrates), 3 oz. turkey (3 meats), lettuce, and tomato] ▪ 2 teaspoons light mayonnaise (1 fat) ▪ 1/2 cup sugar-free pudding (1 carbohydrate) ▪ small banana (1 carbohydrate) ▪ iced tea with lemon and artificial sweetener
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 oz. sliced roast beef (3 meats) ▪ 1 cup whipped potatoes (2 carbohydrates) ▪ 1 teaspoon margarine (1 fat) ▪ 1/2 cup corn (1 carbohydrate) ▪ 1/2 cup broccoli (1 vegetable) ▪ tossed salad with low calorie dressing (1 vegetable, 1 fat) ▪ 1/2 cup peaches (1 carbohydrate) ▪ coffee or tea and artificial sweetener
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 graham cracker squares (1 carbohydrate)