

Eating Well with

DIABETES CANADA

HELPING YOU MANAGE DIABETES,
ONE NUTRITIOUS PLATE AT A TIME.



DIABETES
CANADA

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Introduction to your **Eating Well with Diabetes Canada** guide

Eating well is foundational to good health. For the four million people diagnosed and living with diabetes, it's also critical to blood sugar management. Unfortunately, with so much information out there, it can be difficult to know which nutrition sources to trust. That's why Diabetes Canada has put together this helpful **Eating Well with Diabetes Canada** guide.

This book will help you...



Learn how to prepare healthy food options.



Better understand diabetes and its management.



Quickly find the tools and tips you need.



Diabetes Canada is here to support you. We've been committed to improving the quality of life of people living with diabetes for nearly 70 years. Today, we're the nation's most trusted provider of diabetes education, research, resources, and services – and now we've compiled healthy eating information and tips in one quick-access guide.

This easy-to-understand, evidence-based resource can support you to live your healthiest life...and offers fun new meal and snack ideas to try out in the kitchen!

Why **nutrition matters** for diabetes management

Despite popular belief, diabetes is not caused by eating too much sugar and people don't "give themselves" diabetes. Your likelihood of developing diabetes depends on your genes, family history, ethnic background, and other factors like the environment and your health. Causes also vary by type of diabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes

An autoimmune disease where your immune system destroys cells in your pancreas, leaving your body without insulin.

Type 2 Diabetes

The result of not enough insulin being made in the pancreas, and/or the body being unable to use the insulin it makes.

Prediabetes

When your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed with diabetes.

Gestational Diabetes

Occurs during pregnancy when the pancreas can't produce enough insulin due to the hormone changes associated with pregnancy.

All types of diabetes occur when your body has difficulty regulating the amount of sugar in your blood.

What does every type of diabetes have in *common*?

Management strategies can differ significantly from person to person. But while types of treatments can vary, the importance of **eating well** is shared by all people living with diabetes.



Cheesy Veggie Egg Bites

Ingredients

3 medium/large zucchini, grated (about 4 cups)

3 eggs, whisked

2 cups light cheddar cheese, grated

1/2 cup cornmeal, finely ground

Nutrients per Serving

Per 4 bites (128 g)

Calories	130
Fat	5 g
Saturated Fat	2.5 g
+ Trans Fat	0.1 g
Sodium	200 mg
Cholesterol	70 mg
Carbohydrate	9 g
Fibre	1 g
Sugars	1 g
Protein	11 g

Busting Diabetes Myths

Myth: The saturated fat in eggs dramatically raises cholesterol levels in the body.

Fact: Eggs are a good source of protein and contain many important nutrients. The cholesterol in eggs doesn't significantly contribute to blood cholesterol levels.

 COOK TIME: **25 MINUTES**  NET CARBS: **8 G**

 SERVES: **4**  SERVING SIZE: **4 BITES (128 G)**



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and line two baking sheets with parchment paper, set aside.
2. Grate zucchini and using a clean dish towel, squeeze out any excess liquid (you will likely have to do this in 2-3 batches).
3. In a mixing bowl, add all ingredients and mix until well combined. Form into patties (about 2 Tbsp each) and place onto prepared baking sheets.
4. Bake in preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, flipping halfway through. They will be lightly browned.
5. Allow to cool and store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 4 days. These freeze well too, so make a double batch if you have a ton of zucchini!

Apple Pie Overnight Oats

Ingredients

1/2 cup whole grain quick oats
2 Tbsp hemp seeds
1/2 cup low fat plain Greek yogurt
1/2 cup 1% milk
1/4 tsp vanilla extract

TOPPINGS

1 small apple (about 3/4 cup), chopped
1 tsp brown sugar
1/2 tsp cinnamon
5 pecans, chopped

Nutrients per Serving

Per 1 1/2 cup (375 mL)

Calories	540
Fat	20 g
Saturated Fat	3.5 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	95 mg
Cholesterol	15 mg
Carbohydrate	68 g
Fibre	10 g
Sugars	32 g
Protein	27 g

Busting Diabetes Myths

Myth: People with diabetes can't eat sugar.

Fact: You can enjoy sugar and sweeteners in moderation.

 COOK TIME: **N/A**

 NET CARBS: **58 G**

 SERVES: **1**

 SERVING SIZE: **1 1/2 CUPS (375 ML)**



Directions

1. In a medium sized mason jar or glass dish with a lid, mix oats, hemp, yogurt, milk and extract until well combined.
2. Top with chopped apple, brown sugar, cinnamon and pecans. Refrigerate overnight and in the morning give it a good stir and enjoy!

Curried Butternut Squash Pear Soup

Ingredients

2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced
1 1/2 lbs butternut squash, peeled, seeds and strings scooped out, and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 large pear, preferably Bosc, peeled, halved, cored, and coarsely chopped
1/2 tsp each salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 Tbsp mild curry powder
1 cup apple cider or apple juice
3 cups water
3/4 cup 18% MF table cream
6 Tbsp plain 0% MF Greek yogurt, for garnish
 Dill sprigs, for garnish

Nutrients per Serving

Per 1/6 of recipe (325 g)

Calories	200
Fat	10 g
Saturated Fat	4 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	220 mg
Cholesterol	20 mg
Carbohydrate	26 g
Fibre	4 g
Sugars	11 g
Protein	4 g

 **COOK TIME: 50 MINUTES**  **NET CARBS: 22 G**

 **SERVES: 6**  **SERVING SIZE: 1/6 RECIPE (325 G)**



Directions

1. In a 6-quart soup pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Sauté the onion, stirring frequently, until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the squash and pear and season with salt and pepper. Decrease the heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, until the squash softens and slightly caramelizes, about 15 minutes.
2. Add the curry powder and continue stirring for 1 minute to let the curry flavors bloom. Pour in the apple cider. Increase the heat to medium, add the 3 cups water, and simmer until the squash is completely cooked through, about 30 minutes.
3. Stir in the cream and return the soup to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper. In batches, carefully liquefy the hot soup in a blender.
4. To serve, pour the soup into bowls and garnish with a dollop of Greek yogurt and dill sprigs.

Four Bean Salad

Ingredients

2 cups fresh or frozen cut green or yellow beans

1 cup frozen, shelled edamame beans

1 can (19 oz) red kidney beans, drained, rinsed

1 can (19 oz) chickpeas, drained, rinsed

1 cup chopped celery

1/2 cup chopped red or sweet white onion

1/2 cup finely chopped red bell pepper

6 Tbsp canola or olive oil

3 Tbsp white vinegar

1 tsp sugar

1 tsp dry mustard

1 tsp dried thyme or **1 Tbsp** fresh thyme

1/2 tsp garlic powder

1/2 tsp black pepper

1/4 tsp salt

 **COOK TIME: 5 MINUTES**  **NET CARBS: 13 G**
 **SERVES: 10**  **SERVING SIZE: 3/4 CUP (175 ML)**



Directions

1. Heat a medium pot of water over high heat. Once boiling, add green beans and edamame and cook 2-3 minutes until just tender. Drain and rinse with cold water.
2. Mix cooked beans, kidney beans, chickpeas, celery, onion and bell pepper in a large bowl.
3. Whisk together remaining ingredients in a small bowl and toss with bean mixture. Cover and refrigerate for up to 24 hours before serving.

Nutrients per Serving

Per 3/4 cup (175 mL)

Calories	180
Fat	10 g
Saturated Fat	0.5 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	170 mg
Cholesterol	0 mg
Carbohydrate	18 g
Fibre	5 g
Sugars	3 g
Protein	6 g

White Fish with Roast Garlic & Lentil Mash

Ingredients

ROASTED GARLIC

2 heads of garlic

1 Tbsp canola oil

1 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley

1/4 tsp fresh ground pepper

LENTIL MASH

canola oil cooking spray

2 cups cooked or canned, rinsed and drained, green lentils

1 large tomato, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tsp chopped fresh thyme

1/2 cup reduced-sodium vegetable broth

FISH

4 white fish fillets (about 1 lb)

canola oil cooking spray

1/2 tsp curry powder

1 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Nutrients per Serving

Per 1 fillet & 1/2 cup (125 mL)

Calories	560
Fat	10 g
Saturated Fat	1.5 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	300 mg
Cholesterol	200 mg
Carbohydrate	28 g
Fibre	9 g
Sugars	3 g
Protein	36 g

⌚ COOK TIME: 10 MINS 🌿 NET CARBS: 19 G 👥 SERVES: 4

🍴 SERVING SIZE: 1 FILLET (90 G) + 1/2 CUP (125 ML)



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 °F (200 °C).
2. Cut stem off garlic heads to expose cloves. Wrap with foil and roast for about 1 hour until very soft. Let cool slightly. Squeeze out garlic cloves from each head and mash in canola oil with fork. Stir in parsley and pepper; set aside.
3. To prepare lentil mash: spray nonstick skillet with canola oil cooking spray and over medium heat, add lentils, tomatoes, garlic and thyme. Cook for 5 minutes; mash slightly. Stir in broth and keep warm.
4. Spray fish fillets with canola oil cooking spray and sprinkle with curry powder and parsley. Preheat oven to 350 °F (180 °C).
5. In nonstick, ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat, sear fish on both sides. Spread roasted garlic mixture on top of fillets and place in oven for about 5 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested.
6. Spoon lentil mixture into shallow bowl and top with fish fillets.

Spicy Fish Tacos with Pear Mango Salsa

Ingredients

2 Tbsp canola oil
1/4 cup lime juice
1 tsp minced garlic
1 tsp ground cumin
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp ground cayenne pepper
6 white fish fillets (4 ounces each) fresh or frozen, thawed
3/4 cup diced pears
1/2 cup peeled, pitted, diced fresh mango
1/2 cup sliced red grapes
1 Tbsp minced red onion
1 Tbsp minced jalapeno pepper, seeded
1 Tbsp chopped cilantro
12 (6-inch) flour tortillas, preferably whole wheat or multigrain

Nutrients per Serving

Per 2 tacos (220 g)

Calories	440
Fat	18 g
Saturated Fat	4.5 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	600 mg
Cholesterol	70 mg
Carbohydrate	40 g
Fibre	8 g
Sugars	7 g
Protein	29 g

⌚ COOK TIME: **25 MINUTES** 🌿 NET CARBS: **32 G**
 👥 SERVES: **6** 🍴 SERVING SIZE: **2 TACOS (220 G)**



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Whisk oil, lime juice, garlic, cumin, salt, and cayenne pepper in small bowl; set aside.
3. Place fish in single layer in 13 x 9 baking dish. Pour oil and lime juice mixture over fish and refrigerate 30 minutes.
4. Bake 20 to 25 minutes until fish is opaque and flakes with fork.
5. Mix pear, mango, grapes, onion, jalapeno and cilantro in small bowl.
6. Flake fish and serve with salsa on warm tortillas.

Chicken & White Bean Stew

Ingredients

2 Tbsp canola oil
1 lb boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch (5 cm) pieces
1 medium onion, chopped
1 cup carrots, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 package sliced cremini mushrooms
1 Tbsp chopped fresh thyme leaves
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 Tbsp each cold water and cornstarch
4 cups chopped kale
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Nutrients per Serving

Per 1 1/4 cup (310 mL)

Calories	280
Fat	9 g
Saturated Fat	1.5 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	220 mg
Cholesterol	50 mg
Carbohydrate	24 g
Fibre	6 g
Sugars	3 g
Protein	27 g

 **COOK TIME: 35 MINUTES**  **NET CARBS: 18 G**

 **SERVES: 6**  **SERVING SIZE: 1 1/4 CUPS (310 ML)**



Directions

1. In a Dutch oven or large heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add chicken; cook, stirring until browned, about 4 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer mixture to plate; set aside.
2. Add onion and carrots; cook until softened, about 3 minutes. Add garlic, mushrooms, thyme and 2 Tbsp (30 mL) water; cook, stirring occasionally until mushrooms are tender and no liquid remains, about 4 to 5 minutes.
3. Add chicken mixture to Dutch oven. Stir in beans and broth; bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for about 20 minutes.
4. In small bowl stir together water and cornstarch; stir into Dutch oven; add kale. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer until thickened, stirring constantly until kale is tender-crisp, or for about 3 to 5 minutes. Garnish with Parmesan cheese.

Chicken Fajita Bowl with Cilantro Lime Rice

Ingredients

1 tsp canola oil
3/4 cup brown rice
1/2 tsp dried thyme
1 1/2 cups water
1/4 cup chopped cilantro
 Juice and zest of 1 lime
1 package low-sodium taco or fajita seasoning
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts, sliced into strips
3 cups mushrooms, sliced
3 medium bell peppers, red, orange and green, sliced (about 3 cups)
1 medium red onion, sliced (1 cup)
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed, warmed if desired
3 cups romaine lettuce, shredded
3 cups raw spinach, shredded
4 Tbsp 1/4 cup salsa
4 Tbsp 1/4 cup green onion, thinly sliced
4 Tbsp 1/4 cup low fat sour cream

Nutrients per Serving

Per 1/4 of recipe (510 g)

Calories	440
Fat	10 g
Saturated Fat	2.5 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	570 mg
Cholesterol	60 mg
Carbohydrate	59 g
Fibre	12 g
Sugars	8 g
Protein	36 g

 **COOK TIME: 45 MINUTES**
 **NET CARBS: 47 G**
 **SERVES: 4**
 **SERVING SIZE: 1/4 RECIPE (510 G)**



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
2. Heat oil in a medium sized pot over medium-high heat. Add rice and thyme and heat for 1-2 minutes before adding water. Bring to a simmer, cover and reduce heat to low. Cook about 40-45 minutes until water is absorbed. Once cooked, fluff rice with a fork and add cilantro, lime juice and zest; set aside.
3. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, mix taco seasoning and oil. Add chicken strips, mushrooms, peppers, and onion and mix to coat.
4. Place ingredients onto a large baking sheet; bake for 10-12 minutes. Remove from the oven and gently toss ingredients. Return to the oven for another 10 minutes.
5. Divide beans, romaine, spinach and rice into 4 bowls. Top with chicken and vegetable fajita mixture along with salsa, sour cream and green onion.

Baked Beans on Toast with Spinach & Poached Eggs

Ingredients

2 strips bacon, low sodium
1 medium onion, diced
2 cloves garlic
1 Tbsp tomato paste
1 tsp cumin
2 tsp smoked paprika
2 tsp chili powder
1/4 cup passata
1 1/2 Tbsp brown sugar
1 cup water
1 can white kidney beans, low sodium
1 can lentils, low sodium
142 g container spinach
8 eggs, poached
8 slices whole grain bread, toasted

Nutrients per Serving

Per 2 topped slices of toast

Calories	500
Fat	14 g
Saturated Fat	4 g
+ Trans Fat	0.1 g
Sodium	390 mg
Cholesterol	390 mg
Carbohydrate	58 g
Fibre	16 g
Sugars	12 g
Protein	32 g

 COOK TIME: **30 MINUTES**  NET CARBS: **42 G**

 SERVES: **4**  SERVING SIZE: **2 TOPPED TOAST (450 G)**



Directions

1. Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium heat, add bacon, cook for about 5 minutes and once it starts to brown, add in the onion and garlic.
2. Cook for about 6-8 minutes until onions start to become fragrant and translucent.
3. Add in tomato paste along with spices and cook for 1 minute, while stirring.
4. Next add in passata, brown sugar, water, beans and lentils and cook for about 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally until thickened.
5. In a separate pan, add water until hot, and add spinach and cook until spinach is wilted, drain any remaining water.
6. Toast bread, place onto a plate, put the spinach on top, then baked beans, and top with an egg.

Apple Berry Crisp

Ingredients

4 medium sized apples, peeled and diced
2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
2 Tbsp brown sugar, divided
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 Tbsp cornstarch
3/4 cup rolled oats
1 Tbsp wheat germ
1 Tbsp canola oil
1/4 tsp cinnamon

Nutrients per Serving

Per 1/2 cup (125 mL)

Calories	120
Fat	2 g
Saturated Fat	0 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	0 mg
Cholesterol	0 mg
Carbohydrate	25 g
Fibre	4 g
Sugars	15 g
Protein	2 g

 **COOK TIME: 30-43 MINUTES**  **NET CARBS: 21 G**
 **SERVES: 8**  **SERVING SIZE: 1/2 CUP (125 ML)**



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine apples, blueberries, half the brown sugar, vanilla, and cornstarch. Place mixture into a 2 quart (2 L) baking dish.
3. In a second bowl, combine rolled oats, wheat germ, canola oil, cinnamon, and remaining brown sugar. Sprinkle crumb mixture over fruit.
4. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until fruit is bubbly. Remove from oven.

Chocolate Cake with Raspberries

Ingredients

1/2 cup + 1/2 tsp canola oil, divided
1 cup pureed prunes (2 baby food pouches)
1 large egg
1/2 cup maple syrup
2 tsp vanilla extract
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup ground almonds
1/2 cup cocoa powder
1 Tbsp baking powder
1 cup raspberries
2 tsp icing sugar

Nutrients per Serving

Per 1/12 of cake (75 g)

Calories	250
Fat	15 g
Saturated Fat	1.5 g
+ Trans Fat	1.5 g
Sodium	95 mg
Cholesterol	15 mg
Carbohydrate	29 g
Fibre	3 g
Sugars	14 g
Protein	4 g

 COOK TIME: **25 MINUTES**  NET CARBS: **26 G**

 SERVES: **12**  SERVING SIZE: **1/12TH CAKE (75 G)**



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Grease a 9-inch round cake pan with ½ teaspoon (2.5 mL) of canola oil or cooking spray.
3. Combine the pureed prunes, egg, maple syrup, vanilla and remaining oil in a medium bowl and set aside.
4. Combine flour, ground almonds, cocoa powder and baking powder in a large bowl; stir to combine.
5. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix until just combined. Try not to overmix; just until the flour is coated in wet mixture and there are no streaks remaining.
6. Bake for 22-25 minutes or until the toothpick comes out clean from the center of the cake (a little crumb on the toothpick is ok). Run a small knife around the edge to loosen and let cool completely.
7. Once cooled, put a plate overtop of the pan and invert so that the cake falls out onto the plate. Top the cake with raspberries and dust with icing sugar.

Walnut, Flax & Carrot Cookies

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup** canola oil
- 2/3 cup** brown sugar, lightly packed
- 1** egg
- 1 tsp** pure vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup** whole-wheat or all-purpose gluten-free flour
- 3/4 cup** rolled oats
- 1/4 cup** ground flaxseed
- 1/2 cup** chopped walnuts
- 2 tsp** cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp** baking soda
- 1 cup** finely grated carrots, packed

Nutrients per Serving

Per 1/3 cup (75 mL)

Calories	110
Fat	7 g
Saturated Fat	0.5 g
+ Trans Fat	0 g
Sodium	20 mg
Cholesterol	10 mg
Carbohydrate	10 g
Fibre	1.4 g
Sugars	4 g
Protein	2 g

 **COOK TIME: 13-15 MINUTES**  **NET CARBS: 9 G**

 **SERVES: 24**  **SERVING SIZE: 1 COOKIE**



Directions

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 2.** In a mixing bowl, beat together canola oil, sugar, egg and vanilla.
- 3.** In a separate bowl, toss together flour, oats, flaxseed, walnuts, cinnamon and baking soda.
- 4.** Add dry ingredients and carrots to the wet ingredients and stir well by hand to combine.
- 5.** Scoop tablespoon-sized portions and place on a cookie sheet, about 2 in. (5 cm) apart. Bake for 13 to 15 minutes.

How to Pack a Healthy Snack

Incorporating healthy snacks into your day can help you feel more satisfied between meals.

For people who take insulin or blood sugar-lowering medications, snacks can help prevent low blood sugar. But they may not need to be included in all meal plans. Have a look at our [snacking resource](#) to see if snacks would be beneficial for your diabetes management. If you are going to snack, aim for combination of a carbohydrate foods that contains fibre along with a source of protein.

Mix and match a carbohydrate with a protein choice to create a variety of snacks.



Carbohydrate [15 g]

Whole wheat bread (1 slice), **naan** (6"), **tortilla** (6"), **pita** (1/2), **Bannock** (1.5x2.5 in)

Air popped popcorn (2 1/2 cups)

Berries (blueberries 1 cup, strawberries 2 cups)

Baby Carrots (16)

Whole wheat bagel (1/2)

Whole grain crackers (melba toast, rye crisp, rice cracker) 4

Apple, orange or pear (1 small)

Tortilla wrap, whole wheat (6")

Low-fat milk (1 cup)

Tortilla chips (8 chips/25 g)

Dried fruit (2 Tbsp)



Protein [7 g]

Peanut or nut butter (2 Tbsp)

Hemp seeds (2 Tbsp)

Egg (1 large)

Cheese (1 oz/30 g)

Edamame (1/2 cup)

1% Cottage cheese (1/4 cup)

Pumpkin seeds (2 Tbsp)

Hummus (about 1/3 cup)

Nuts, peanuts (1/4 cup)

Plain Greek yogurt (1/2 cup)

Cooked meat, fish or poultry (1oz/30 g)

Chickpeas, lentils, pulses (1/2 cup)

Choosing the right fats

Fat is an essential nutrient that the human body needs in order to function – just like protein and carbohydrates. Fats provide the body with energy, help it to absorb certain vitamins, and are needed to perform other important functions.

Not all fats are created equal, so here's what you should know when managing your diet.



Unsaturated fats

These are considered healthier options. They help lower levels of LDL-cholesterol that can increase your risk of heart disease. There are two types of unsaturated fats: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated.



Saturated fats

These fats are typically found in butter, meats, and other animal products, and are considered less healthy because they can raise LDL-cholesterol levels and contribute to your risk of developing heart disease.



Tip

Nutrition packaging doesn't specify unsaturated fats separately. Instead, subtract the saturated/trans fats listed from the total fats value to see how much "healthy fat" is in your food. To note, trans fats have been banned in Canada for some time now, so if you see this on a product label, it will be naturally occurring in the food and not added.

The importance of portions

Knowing what to eat and how much to eat will help you manage your blood sugar levels. Both your hands and your plate can be useful portion control guides.

Handy portion guide

Your hands can be very useful in estimating the right amount of food to eat. When you are planning a meal, use the following portion sizes as a guide:



Fruits/Grains & Starches
Choose an amount the size of your fist for grains or starches, or fruit.



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



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



Vegetables
Choose as much as you can hold in both hands. Choose brightly coloured vegetables.

Fruits/Grains & Starches

Examples: Orange, apple, potatoes, brown rice, pasta

Vegetables

Examples: Broccoli, lettuce, green beans, bell peppers

Protein Foods

Examples: Lean beef, chicken, pork, fish, eggs, tofu, yogurt, milk (skim, 1%), cheese

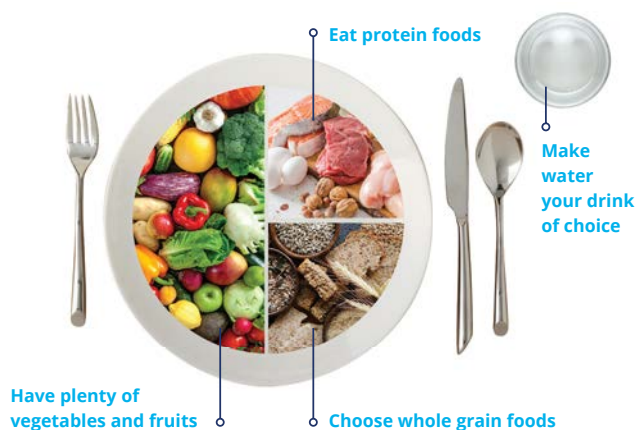
Fats

Examples: Non-hydrogenated margarine, canola oil, olive oil, peanut oil



The Plate Method

Canada's Food Guide suggests filling half your plate with vegetables and fruits. People with diabetes should choose more vegetables than fruit, because most vegetables have less sugar. Divide the other half of your plate between $\frac{1}{4}$ protein and $\frac{1}{4}$ whole grains and starchy vegetable foods.



Weighing the benefits

Portion size is an important part of a healthy eating pattern and blood sugar management. Be sure to talk to your health care team about the right approach for you and listen to your body's cues for hunger and fullness.

Simple tips for healthy eating

Eating well is good for you and for your family. Here are some simple tips to help inform your nutrition choices.



When to eat?

- Be sure to **eat breakfast**
- Eat **three meals per day** at regular times
- Space meals no more than **six hours apart**
- You may want to include a **healthy snack**

How much to eat

- Eat **slowly**
- Stop when you **feel full and satisfied**

What to eat

- Eat a **variety of foods** at each meal or snack
- Limit **sugars and sweets**
- Limit **high fat** and overly greasy foods
- **Reduce fat** in cooking by baking, broiling, braising or steaming
- Include foods **high in fibre** such as whole grains, beans, lentils, fruits and vegetables
- Make **water** your drink of choice



Why every bite counts

The right amount of food gives your body what it needs to be healthy. Eating healthy foods regularly throughout the day will help you manage your diabetes and overall health.

Counting carbohydrates 101

Carbohydrate counting is a flexible way to plan your meals. It focuses on foods that contain carbohydrate, as these raise your blood sugar the most. Follow these steps to help manage your blood sugar levels!

STEP 1 Make healthy food choices

Enjoy a variety of foods across food groups. Use added fats in small amounts. Choose portion sizes to match your cues for hunger and fullness.

STEP 2 Focus on carbohydrates

Carbohydrate is found in many foods including grains and starches, fruits, some vegetables, legumes, milk, yogurt, sugary foods, and many prepared foods.

STEP 3 Determine carbohydrate content

Track what you eat and drink, noting grams of carbohydrate. You may need to use measuring cups and food scales for accurate portion sizes.

STEP 4 Set carbohydrate goals

Your health care team can help you set a goal for the number of grams of carbohydrate you need at each meal (typically it's around 45-60 g for women and 60-75 g for men) and snack (15-30 g). Aim to meet your target within 5 g per meal/snack.

STEP 5 Monitor effect on blood sugar level

Work with your health-care team to correct blood sugar levels that are too high or too low.

Nutrition Facts

Per 90 g serving (2 slices)

Amount	%	Daily Value
Calories		170
Fat	2.7 g	4 %
Saturated	0.5 g	5 %
+ Trans	0 g	
Cholesterol	0 mg	
Sodium	200 mg	8 %
Carbohydrate	36 g	13 %
Fibre	6 g	24 %
Sugars	3 g	
Protein	8 g	
Vitamin A	1 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium	2 %	Iron 1 6 %

Finding carbohydrate values using the Nutrition Facts table

The amount of carbohydrate in a food is listed on the Nutrition Facts table.

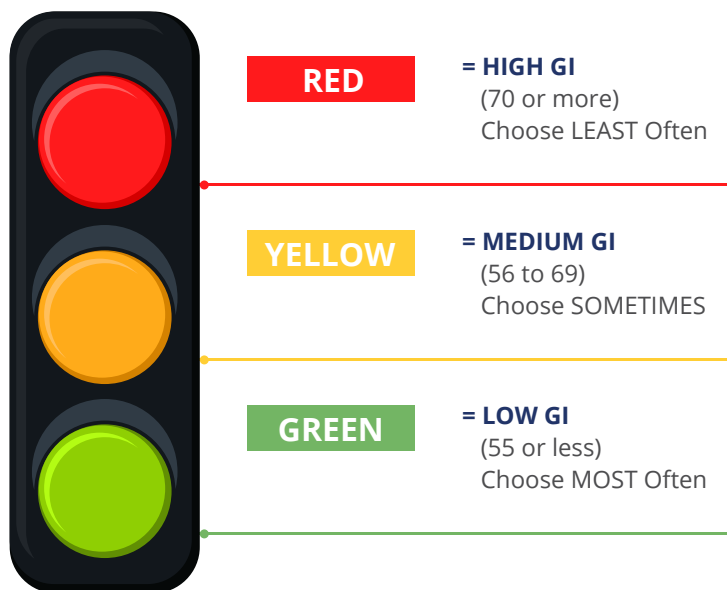
- The amount listed is for the serving size given. Are you eating more, less, or the same amount? Compare your serving size to figure out the amount of carbohydrate you are eating.
- The total amount of carbohydrate in grams is listed first. This number includes starch, sugars and fibre. (Starch is not listed separately.)
- Fibre does not raise blood sugar and should be subtracted from the total carbohydrate (e.g., 36 g carbohydrate – 6 g fibre = 30 g available carbohydrate).

Understanding the **glycemic index**

The **glycemic index (GI)** is a scale that ranks a carbohydrate-containing food or drink by how fast it raises blood sugar levels after a set amount is eaten. Foods with a high GI tend to increase blood sugar faster than foods with a low GI.

On top of the type of carbohydrate you choose, the quantity or serving size also has a role to play in managing your blood sugar. Even low GI foods need to be eaten in a specific amount or serving size to avoid a high blood sugar response.

Glycemic Index Categories



Foods in the high GI category can be swapped with foods in the medium and/or low GI category.

Benefits of a low GI diet

- Decrease risk of type 2 diabetes.
- Help manage your blood sugar.
- Decrease risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Feel full longer.

Lower your meals' glycemic index using these meal planning ideas.



Try lower-GI grains, such as barley and bulgur.



Swap half of your higher-GI starch food serving with beans, lentils or chickpeas.

View our [glycemic index guide](#) to get a comprehensive list of foods by GI Index colour.

#LetsEndDiabetes

Diabetes Canada is here for YOU on your diabetes journey. We hope you've found this Healthy Habits e-Book helpful. Remember to talk to a registered dietitian for personalized nutrition advice. You can also visit diabetes.ca anytime to access more useful tools!

Resources like this one are made possible thanks to our amazing community of Diabetes Canada supporters. Together, we support the four million people across Canada diagnosed and living with diabetes in 2025. Diabetes Canada donors are helping to End Diabetes by:

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- Enabling diabetes management and prevention education across the country
- Maintaining vital resources like our Information line 1-800-BANTING to provide information and support

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