**NUTRITION**

**Eating doesn’t have to be boring.**

**It’s all about finding the right balance that works for you.**

When you’re managing diabetes, your eating plan is a powerful tool. But figuring out what to eat can feel like a hassle, right? Well, it doesn't have to because there are easy things you can do to add flavor to your daily routine—including healthy twists on your favorite foods.

The one key to feeling your best lies in the food you eat—so don't give up. You can start by working with a dietitian or registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) to make an eating plan that works for you. Be sure to include foods you like and don’t be afraid to try something new.

Most importantly, remember that eating well—and adding activity to your daily routine (moving more)—are important ways you can manage diabetes. And we’re here to help you every step of the way.

[What can I eat?](https://www.diabetes.org/blog/nutrition-report)

**Diabetes Cookbooks**

Discover cookbooks with recipes that are tasty and help you maintain healthy eating.

**You’re part of the club**

As you work on eating healthier, surrounding yourself with the right kind of support will be important. Start with your people. Share your nutrition challenges—talk about it as openly as you feel comfortable. Not only will this help you clear your head, but by hearing from others, you can sharpen your resolve to stay on target with your diet.

Next, reach out to your community. Not only are we here to help, but there are often local resources that you can use. Aren’t sure where to find those? Ask your doctor or dietitian.

Most of all, don’t let how you manage your diabetes isolate you. Share your questions, emotions, and feelings with your club.  Chances are someone nearby is dealing with something similar.

**Carbs, carbs, carbs—what about them?**

When you eat or drink things that have carbohydrate, your body breaks those carbs down into glucose (a type of sugar), which then raises the level of glucose in your blood. Your body uses that glucose, or sugar, for fuel to keep you going throughout the day.

Knowing what kind and how many carbs to eat is important for managing diabetes. Eating too many carbs can raise your blood glucose too high. This can cause trouble if you do not have enough insulin in your body to help deliver the glucose to the cells in your body. Eating too little carbohydrate can also be harmful because your blood glucose may drop too low, especially if you take medicines to help manage your blood sugar. Balance is key!

There are three main types of carbohydrates in food—starches, sugar and fiber. As you’ll see on the nutrition labels for the food you buy, the term “total carbohydrate” refers to all three of these types. And as you begin counting carbohydrates, you’ll want to stay away from food that has high carbs and instead choose a more balanced nutrient mix of carbs, protein, and fat.

The goal is to choose carbs that are nutrient-dense, which means they are rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals, and low in added sugars, sodium, and unhealthy fats.

When choosing carbohydrate…

**Eat the most of these:**whole, unprocessed non-starchy vegetables.

* Non-starchy vegetables like lettuce, cucumbers, broccoli, tomatoes, and green beans have a lot of fiber and very little carbohydrate, which means little impact on your blood sugar.

**Eat more of these**: whole, minimally processed carbohydrate foods.

* Fruits like apples, blueberries, strawberries, and cantaloupe
* Whole intact grains like brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole grain pasta, and oatmeal
* Starchy vegetables like corn, green peas, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and plantain
* Beans and lentils like black beans, kidney beans, chickpeas, and green lentils

**Eat less of these**: refined, highly processed carbohydrate foods and those with added sugar.

* Sugary drinks like soda, sweet tea, and juice drinks
* Refined grains like white bread, white rice, and sugary cereal
* Sweets and snack foods like cake, cookies, candy, and chips

**Foods high in starch include:**

* Starchy vegetables like peas, corn, lima beans and potatoes
* Dried beans, lentils and peas such as pinto beans, kidney beans, black-eyed peas and split peas
* Grains like oats, barley and rice (The majority of grain products in the US are made from wheat flour. These include pasta, bread and crackers, but the variety is expanding to include other grains as well.)

**As for sugar, there are two main types:**

* Naturally occurring sugars such as those in milk or fruit
* Added sugars such as those added during processing such as fruit canned in heavy syrup or sugar added in to a cookie

On the nutrition facts label, the number of sugar grams includes both added and natural sugars.

**And as for fiber ...**

Remember that it comes from plant-based foods, so there’s no fiber in milk, eggs, meat, poultry, and fish. Healthy adults need between 25 and 30 grams of fiber a day.

**Good sources of dietary fiber include:**

* Beans and legumes like black beans, kidney beans, pintos, chick peas, white beans, and lentils
* Fruits and vegetables, especially those with edible skin (like apples and beans) and those with edible seeds (like berries)
* Nuts—try different kinds. Peanuts, walnuts, and almonds are a good source of fiber and healthy fat, but watch portion sizes, because they also contain a lot of calories in a small amount.
* Whole grains such as:
  + Whole wheat pasta
  + Whole grain cereals, specifically those with three grams of dietary fiber or more per serving, including those made from whole wheat, wheat bran, and oats