

What to Eat When You Have Diabetes

Managing diabetes day-to-day is full of choices. What you choose to eat is up to you! What you eat can help keep your blood sugar levels under control and lower your risk of disease. Make healthy choices by following these suggestions. *Also see 5 Tips to Manage Diabetes* handout.

Non-starchy Vegetables*

Spinach, celery, broccoli, asparagus, green beans, cauliflower, carrots, cabbage, kale, mushrooms, lettuce, peppers, brussel sprouts



One serving = 1 cup raw 

Or = 1/2 cup cooked 

Healthy Fats*

Extra virgin olive oil, avocados, nut butters (peanut, almond, etc.), nuts (almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, pistachios), and seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, sesame, chia)



One serving of healthy fats is *one* of these:

1 ounce of nuts = 1/4 cup  = small handful

1 Tbsp. of plant-based oil = 

2 Tbsp. of nut butter = 

Fish, Poultry, & Meat*

Baked or grilled salmon, tilapia, sardines, trout, poultry (chicken and turkey), lean ground beef, eggs



One serving of animal-based protein:
3 ounces = deck of cards 

Whole Grains**

Whole oats, whole grain barley, quinoa, millet, brown rice, amaranth, bulgur (cracked wheat), whole grain breads, cereals, pastas



One serving of whole grains:
= 1/3 cup cooked whole grains 

= 1 6-inch tortilla

= 1 slice whole wheat/grain bread

Beans & Legumes**

Peas, beans, legumes (like lentils, chickpeas), tofu, soybeans



One serving = 1/2 cup cooked 

Starchy Vegetables**

Sweet potatoes, pumpkin, winter squash (acorn, butternut, etc.), parsnip, plantain, green peas, corn



One serving = 1/2 cup cooked 

Fruits**

Strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, apples (small), pears, peaches



One serving = 1/2 cup chopped 

2 Tbsp. for dried fruit = 

Limit fruits to 2-3 servings a day.

Dairy Options & Substitutes**

Plain, unflavored yogurt/greek yogurt; 1% milk; unsweetened soy, almond, or hemp milk; cheese (mozzarella, cheddar, etc.)



One serving of dairy:

8 ounces of milk = 1 cup 

6 ounces of yogurt = 3/4 cup 

1 ounce of cheese = size of your entire thumb 

Footnotes

* These foods have no or minimal carbs and do not raise blood sugar.

** These foods contain carbohydrates and turn into sugar. Limit these foods to 3 servings/meal and 1 serving/snack.

References:

Ann Intern Med 2009; 151:306.
Diabetes Care 2011; 34:14.
Lancet 2002; 360:1445.

Adapted from American Diabetes Association Handout

Author: W. Kohatsu, MD
Contributor: S. Chen, MD; Z. Trivedi, RD
Copy editor: M. Hayes
Designed by: E. Jimenez

