



Daily Meal Planning Guide

Managing Your Diabetes® patient education program

Good nutrition is one of the most basic and important diabetes care tools. Eating right can help control blood sugar. And good control helps protect your long-term health. This meal planning guide is a great way to begin making smart food choices.

Whether you are following a calorie-level meal plan, counting carbohydrates, using exchanges or just trying to improve the overall nutritional value of your current eating patterns, the food lists on this sheet will give you a solid starting point.

Think of this plan as only a temporary guide. Keep in mind that every person with diabetes should have a customized meal plan that provides more freedom in terms of food choices. Just about any food, including your favorites, can be fit into your meal plan. A Registered Dietitian (RD) can work with you to develop the plan that best meets your needs and lifestyle. Ask your doctor, diabetes educator, hospital, or local diabetes association for the names of dietitians in your area who specialize in diabetes.

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Meal Planning Options

Many effective meal plans involve tracking what you eat. Two of the most popular approaches are counting calories for regulating weight and counting carbohydrate for blood sugar control. Your diabetes healthcare professional will recommend the best approach for your needs.

Calorie Meal Plans

The table below shows sample meal plans, by number of servings, for different calorie levels. To maintain a healthy weight, choose a calorie level close to what you're eating now. If you need to gain or lose weight, ask your doctor, dietitian or educator which plan to use. Each plan provides about half of its calories from carbohydrate and less than 30% of calories from fat, based on choosing skim milk and medium or lower fat meats and cheeses.

Sample Meal Plans

Calories per day	1,200	1,400	1,600	1,800	2,200	2,800	Other:
Carbohydrates							
Starch (15 gram carb servings)	6	6	6	7	9	11	
Vegetables (5 gram carb servings)*	3	3	3	4	4	5	
Fruit (15 gram carb servings)	3	3	3	3	4	4	
Milk & yogurt (12 gram carb servings)**	2	2	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-3	
Other carbohydrates							
Meat & Meat Substitutes	4 oz	4 oz	5 oz	5 oz	6 oz	7 oz	
Fat (5 gram fat servings)							
20% of total calories	2	4	4	5	6	8	
40% of total calories	5	8	9	11	13	18	

* Three vegetable servings provide the same amount of carbohydrates as one serving of other carbohydrate food groups.

** Teenagers, young adults to age 24, and women who are pregnant or breastfeeding need 1200 mg of calcium each day. That equals about 4 servings of milk and yogurt. Eating fat-free and nonfat milk and yogurt will keep fat grams and calories lower.



Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrate (starch and sugar) is the main nutrient in food that raises blood sugar. When you plan meals based on carbohydrate counting, count only the foods that contain carbohydrates. Use either the portion sizes shown in the food list, or calculate the carbohydrate (CHO) grams using the bolded numbers in each food list. If you are using a packaged food with a nutrition label, count the number of carbohydrate grams for the serving size.

Grains, Beans & Starchy Vegetables




Each serving from this food group equals: 15 grams of carbohydrate, 3 grams protein, 1 gram fat, and 80 calories.

These foods are the cornerstone of every healthy eating plan. Most of their calories come from carbohydrates, a good source of energy. Many foods from this group also give you needed fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Prepare and eat starchy foods with as little added fat as possible by limiting butter, margarine, shortening, and oil.

These are just a few of the many available starchy foods. Estimate a single serving size for foods that aren't on the list as follows:

Starchy vegetables, grains, pasta	1/3 cup
Breads and cereals	1 oz
Cooked dried beans of all types	1/2 cup

Cereals/Beans/Grains/Pasta Serving Size

 Beans; cooked or canned (all kinds)	1/3 cup
Cereal; cooked (oatmeal, cream of wheat, rice, etc.)	1/2 cup
Cereal; dry (less than 100 calories per serving) (Serving Sizes vary.)	(see box)
Pasta; cooked (all kinds)	1/2 cup
Rice; cooked (all kinds)	1/3 cup
Starchy Vegetables	
 Corn; cooked or canned	1/2 cup
Corn meal; uncooked (masa or matzo meal)	3 Tbsp
Corn on the cob (medium)	1
Pamsips	1/2 cup
 Peas (green); cooked or canned	1/2 cup
Plantain (green, mature); cooked	1/2 cup
Potato; baked, boiled, steamed	1 small (3 oz)
Squash (winter, acorn, hubbard)	1 cup
Yam or sweet potato	1/2 cup

Breads

Bagel	1/2
Bread (whole wheat, rye, white)	1 slice
English muffin	1/2
Pita pocket bread (6" across)	1/2
Roll, plain bread	1
Sandwich bun or roll (hamburger, hot-dog, kaiser)	1/2
Tortilla (6" corn or 7" flour)	1

Crackers/Snacks

Crackers (saltine or butter-type)	6
Graham crackers (squares)	3
Pretzels (sticks/rings)	3/4 oz
Popcorn (plain, popped)	3 cups

Starches/Breads with Fat

Each serving from this food group equals: 15 grams of carbohydrate, 3 grams protein, 5 grams or more from fat, and 125–150 calories.

Biscuit	1
Tortilla Chips, fried	1 oz
 Potato chips	1 oz
 Refried beans	1/2 cup
Spaghetti & tomato sauce	6 oz

Vegetables

Each serving from this food group equals: 5 grams of carbohydrate, 2 grams protein, and 25 calories.

Vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals and many also provide some fiber. A serving is 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables, 1/2 cup of vegetable juice, or 1 cup of raw vegetables. (Starchy vegetables like potatoes, corn and peas are listed with Grains and Beans. Vegetables with fewer than 20 calories per serving are listed with Free Foods.)

Bean sprouts
Beans (green, waxed, Italian, snap)
Beets
Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrots
Eggplant
Greens
Mushrooms
Okra
Pea pods or snow peas
Peppers
 Sauerkraut
Spinach
Squash (summer, crook neck, zucchini, calabazita)
Tomato
 Tomato or vegetable juice
Water chestnuts

Fruits




Each serving from this food group equals: 15 grams of carbohydrate and 60 calories.

Fruits provide important vitamins and minerals and can be a good source of fiber. To get the most fiber from fruits, eat the edible peelings.

You can estimate the serving size for fruits that aren't on the list as follows:

Fresh, canned, or frozen fruit; no sugar added	1/2 cup
Dried fruit	1/4 cup

Fresh Fruit

	Serving Size
Apple; unpeeled (small)	1
Applesauce; no sugar added	1/2 cup
 Banana (small)	1
 Berries (raspberries)	1 cup
 Berries (blackberries, blueberries)	3/4 cup
Cantaloupe or honeydew melon	1 cup
Cherries; fresh, sweet	12
Grapefruit	1/2
Grapes (seedless)	17
Mandarin oranges	3/4 cup
Mango; fresh	1/2
Orange	1
Papaya	1 cup
Peach (medium)	1 (6 oz)
Pear (large)	1/2 (4 oz)
Pineapple; fresh	3/4 cup
Plums; fresh (small)	2
Raisins (dark, seedless)	2 Tbsp
Watermelon; cubed	1 1/4 cup

Fruit Juices

Apple, orange, or pineapple	1/2 cup
Cranberry, grape or prune	1/3 cup

Milk and Yogurt

Milk and yogurt supply calcium and other minerals, vitamins, protein and carbohydrates. Choose low-fat and skimmed varieties for health. They have less fat, calories, and cholesterol than whole milk products.

Fat-free and low-fat

Each serving from this group equals: 12 grams of carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 0-3 grams fat, and 90–110 calories.

Buttermilk (fat-free, low-fat)	1 cup
Skim, 1/2 %, or 1% milk	1 cup
Yogurt (nonfat, plain or artificially sweetened)	3/4 cup

Reduced-fat milk

Each serving from this group equals: 12 grams of carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 5 grams fat, and 120 calories.

2% milk	1 cup
Yogurt (low fat, plain)	3/4 cup

Whole Milk

Each serving from this group equals: 12 grams of carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 8 grams fat, and 150 calories.

To reduce your intake of cholesterol and saturated fat, limit or avoid foods in this group.

Whole milk	1 cup
Evaporated whole milk	1/2 cup

Sugars and Sweets

Each serving from this group equals: 15 grams carbohydrate, or 1 Starch, or 1 Fruit, or 1 Milk.

Sugars can be included in your meals without losing blood sugar control if they are counted appropriately. Follow Food Guide Pyramid guidelines for keeping the amounts of Sweets and Fats in your overall diet small compared to more nutritionally valuable foods. Portion sizes of foods high in refined sugar are often small. Read the label.

Gelatin (regular)	1/2 cup
Gingersnaps	3
Ice cream (fat-free, no sugar added)	1/2 cup
Jam or jelly (regular)	1 Tbsp
Pudding (regular, sugar-free); made with low-fat milk	1/2 cup
Syrup (regular)	1 Tbsp
Yogurt, frozen (fat-free, low-fat)	1/3 cup

Meat and Meat Substitutes

Small servings of meat and meat substitutes provide enough protein to meet most people's daily needs. For better health, choose very lean and lean meat, fish, poultry, and cheese more often than medium- and high-fat types.

Very Lean Meats	Serving Size
Each serving from this group equals: 7 grams protein, 0-1 grams fat, and 35 calories.	
Cottage cheese (non-fat)	1/4 cup
Cornish hen, no skin	1 oz
Fish; fresh, frozen or canned in water (cod, flounder, tuna)	1 oz
Shellfish (clams, mussels, scallops)	1 oz

Lean Meats

Each serving from this group equals: 7 grams protein, 3 grams fat, and 55 calories.

Cheese (low-fat American, low-fat Cheddar) 1 oz



Medium-Fat Meats

Each serving from this group equals: 7 grams protein, 5 grams fat, and 75 calories.

Beef, most cuts when trimmed	1 oz
Cheese (5 grams of fat or less/oz)	1 oz
Chicken; roasted (dark meat, skin)	1 oz
Eggs; fresh, large	1
Pork (& Canadian bacon, loin chop)	1 oz

High-Fat Meats

Each serving from this group equals: 7 grams protein, 8 grams fat, and 100 calories.

 Cheese, all regular (American, Swiss, etc.)	1 oz
Pork (spareribs)	1 oz
 Sausage	1 oz

Fats

Each serving from this food group equals: 5 grams fat and 45 calories.

Fats add flavor and moisture to food but have few vitamins and minerals. Serving sizes of all fats are small. Choose mono- and polyunsaturated fats more often than saturated fats for better heart health and to lower blood cholesterol levels.

Monounsaturated Fats	Serving Size
Avocado (4" across)	2 Tbsp (1 oz)
Oil (canola, olive, peanut)	1 tsp
Peanut butter	1/2 Tbsp
Macadamias; oil roasted, whole	3
Polyunsaturated Fats	
Margarine (stick, tub or squeeze)	1 tsp
Mayonnaise (reduced fat)	1 Tbsp
Mayonnaise (regular)	1 tsp
Oil (corn, safflower, soybean)	1 tsp


Saturated Fats

Bacon	1 slice
Butter (stick)	1 tsp
Sour cream	2 Tbsp

Free Foods

Each free food or drink contains fewer than 20 calories per serving. Eat as much as you want of the free foods that list no serving size. Eat up to 3 servings per day of free foods that have serving sizes listed. For better blood sugar control, spread your servings of these extra foods throughout the day.

Drinks

 Bouillon or broth (fat-free)	
Coffee or tea	
Soft drinks (calorie-free) or Club Soda	

Sweet Substitutes

Gelatin (sugar-free)	
Jam or jelly (sugar-free)	2 tsp
Syrup (sugar-free)	2 Tbsp

Fruits

Spreadable fruit (100% fruit)	1 Tbsp
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Condiments

Catsup	1 Tbsp
Mustard	
Salsa (all kinds)	
Taco sauce	1 Tbsp
Vinegar (balsamic, red wine)	1 Tbsp

Vegetables


Bamboo shoots, canned
Celery
Cucumber
Peppers (green, red, yellow)
Radishes
Salad greens (all types)
Spinach
Zucchini


Seasonings

Seasonings can be used as desired. If you are on a low-sodium diet, read labels to avoid seasonings that contain sodium or salt.

Cilantro
Flavoring extracts (vanilla, etc.)
Garlic or garlic powder
Herbs, fresh or dried
Lemon or lemon juice
Onion powder
Paprika
Pepper
Pimento
Spices
Tobasco sauce
Worcestershire sauce

Key

 = good source of fiber

 = high in salt

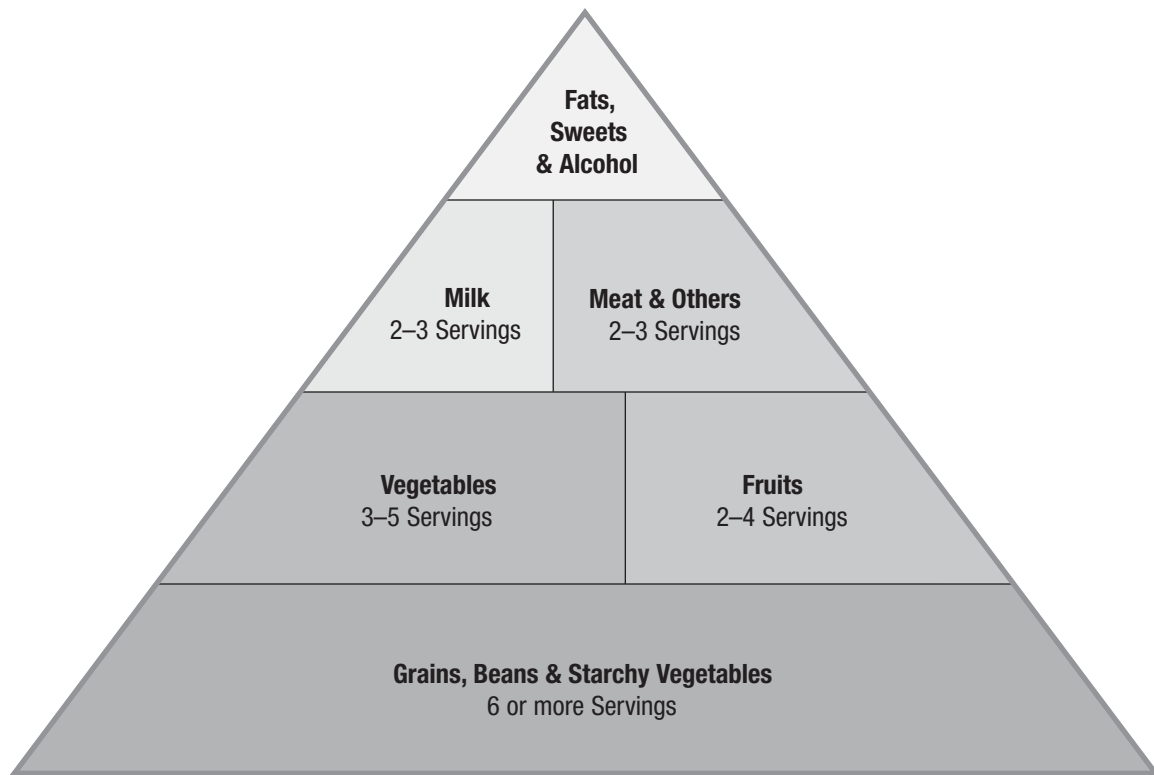
oz = ounce

tsp = teaspoon

Tbsp = Tablespoon

Warshaw, Hope S. *Diabetes Meal Planning Made Easy, 2nd Edition*. Alexandria, VA: American Diabetes Association, 2000.

The Diabetes Food Pyramid



The Diabetes Food Pyramid

The Diabetes Food Pyramid is a little different than the USDA Food Guide Pyramid because it groups foods based on their carbohydrate and protein content instead of their classification as a food. To have about the same carbohydrate content in each serving, the portion sizes are a little different too.

The Diabetes Pyramid gives a range of servings. If you follow the minimum number of servings in each group, you would eat about 1600 calories and if you eat at the upper end of the range, it would be about 2800 calories. The exact number of servings you need depends on your diabetes goals, calorie and nutrition needs, your lifestyle, and the foods you like to eat. If you are using the pyramid, discuss with your healthcare provider the number of servings recommended for your particular needs.

<http://www.diabetes.org/nutrition-and-recipes/nutrition/foodpyramid.jsp>. Accessed 6/14/06.

Try your hand at these guidelines for estimating portion sizes:



fist = 1 cup
(Example: two servings of pasta or oatmeal)



palm = 3 oz
(Example: a cooked serving of meat)



thumb tip = 1 teaspoon
(Example: a serving of mayonnaise or margarine)



handful = 1 or 2 oz snackfood
(Example: 1 oz nuts = 1 handful; 2 oz pretzels = 2 handfuls)



thumb = 1 oz
(Example: a piece of cheese)

Personal Meal Plan

Goal: Distribute the total number of carbohydrate choices throughout the day in meals and snacks.

Total Calories:

Carbohydrate – # of choices:

grams:

Protein (oz):

Fat (grams):

Breakfast

Time:

CHO choices:

Grams CHO:

Lunch

Time:

CHO choices:

Grams CHO:

Dinner

Time:

CHO choices:

Grams CHO:

Daytime or Evening Snack (If part of daily plan)

Time:

CHO choices:

Grams CHO:

Dietitian Name:

Dietitian Phone: ()

Date:

Key: CHO = Carbohydrate

