

# Eating well with Diabetes



Information to help you  
make healthy food choices  
with diabetes

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## **How do I eat well to help manage my diabetes?**

Follow these guidelines:

1. Eat 3 meals a day spaced 4 to 6 hours apart.
2. Eat a variety of foods by choosing different food groups.
3. Eat a consistent amount of carbohydrates at each meal.
4. Choose small amounts of added fats and limit high fat foods, such as fried foods, chips and pastries.
5. Choose healthy portions of meat, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your plate.
6. Choose high fibre choices.
7. Limit sugars and sweets such as sugar, regular pop, desserts, candies, jams and honey.

## **The food groups**

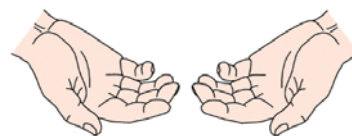
The foods we eat can be broken down into 6 groups.

1. Vegetables
2. Grains and Starches
3. Fruits
4. Milk and Alternatives
5. Meat and Alternatives
6. Fats and Oils

## Serving sizes

Use these pictures to help you choose healthy servings from each of the food groups.

**Vegetables** – Choose as much as you can hold in both hands.



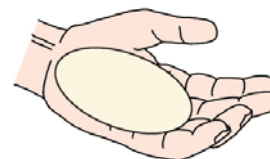
**Grains and starches** – Choose an amount up to the size of a small fist or a tennis ball.



**Fruit** – Choose an amount up to the size of a small fist or a tennis ball.



**Meat and Alternatives** – Choose an amount up to the size of the palm of your hand and the thickness of your little finger.



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



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## What do healthy serving sizes look like on my plate?

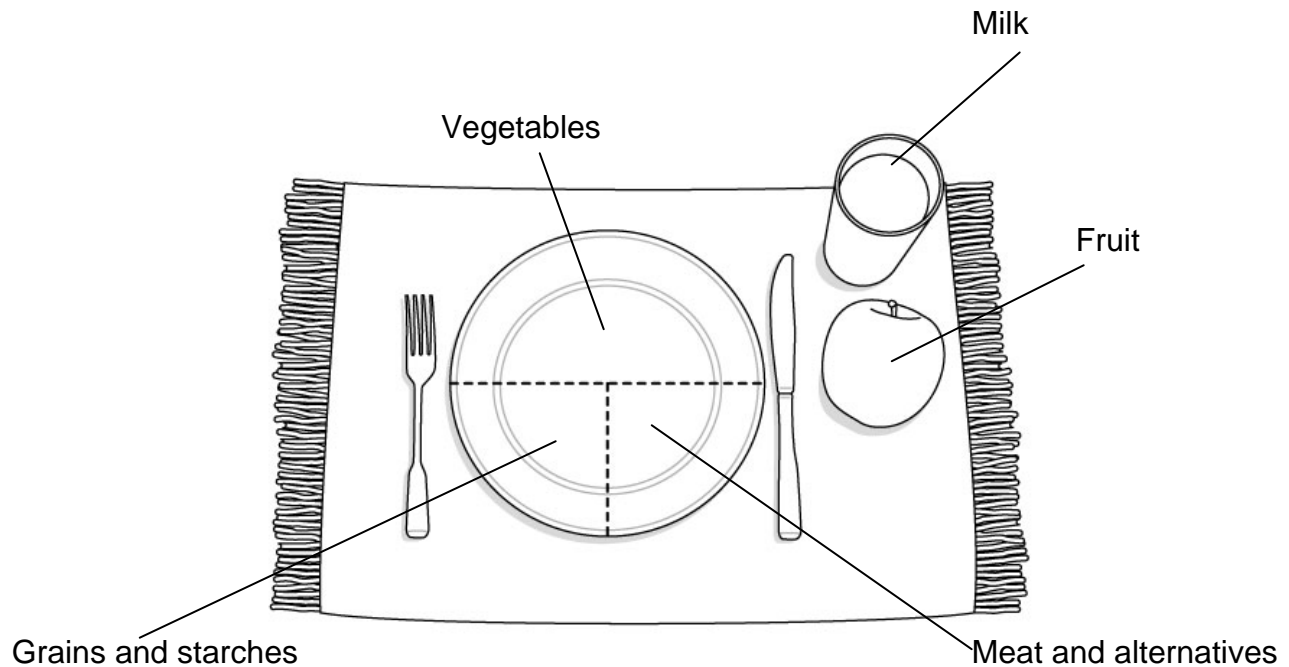
Plan for healthy eating. Dividing your plate into food groups can help you plan a balanced meal.

Use this picture as a guideline to help you keep healthy servings on your plate.

Include:

- $\frac{1}{2}$  plate vegetables
- $\frac{1}{4}$  plate grains and starches
- $\frac{1}{4}$  plate meat and alternatives

Complete your meal with a glass of low-fat milk and piece of fruit.



## Group activity

Can you think of an example of a breakfast, lunch and supper that includes foods from a variety of food groups? Use the pictures on pages 2 and 3 to think about your serving sizes.

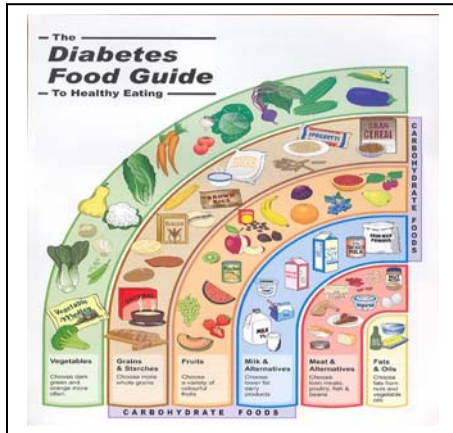
Breakfast	Lunch	Supper

## Is my meal healthy?

When putting together a balanced meal, I chose:

- ☐ foods from a variety of food groups
- ☐ whole grain choices higher in fibre
- ☐ lower fat dairy product
- ☐ lean meat, poultry, fish or beans
- ☐ small amount of healthy fats from vegetable oils or nuts
- ☐ dark green and orange vegetables
- ☐ fruit

## The Diabetes Food Guide

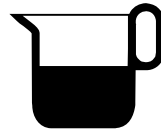


The diabetes food guide shows you the 6 food groups and examples of foods in each food group.

## Measurement guide

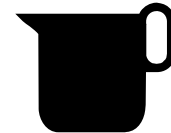


=

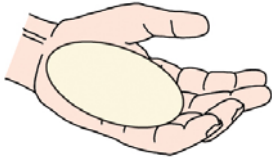


½ cup

to

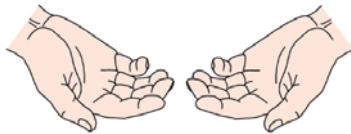


1 cup



=

2 to 3 ounces



=



1 cup

to



2 cups



=



1 teaspoon



## All about carbohydrates

### Which food groups have carbohydrates?

In the Diabetes Food Guide, 3 Food Groups **have carbohydrates**. They are listed on the guide as Carbohydrate Foods:

- Grains and Starches
- Fruits
- Milk and Alternatives

Carbohydrate Foods affect your blood sugar.

These food groups **do not have** carbohydrates and will not affect your blood sugar:

- Vegetables
- Meat and Alternatives
- Fats and Oils

## **Extras**

Extra foods have no or very small amounts of carbohydrates and can be eaten to add variety to your meals and snacks.

They include:

- artificial sweeteners
- broth
- cocoa powder
- coffee and tea
- condiments such as mustard, relish (1 Tbsp)\* and ketchup (1 Tbsp)\*
- dill pickles (one)
- herbs and spices
- jello, diet
- lemon or lime juice
- no added sugar syrup (1 Tbsp)\*
- salsa (1 Tbsp)\*
- sugar-free drinks, such as diet pop, Crystal Light
- sugar-free gum
- sugar-free jams and jellies (1 Tbsp)\*
- vinegar
- water

\* These foods may affect your blood sugar if used in larger amounts than listed.

## How do I read food labels?

### How to count grams of carbohydrate on a food label:

1. Look at the **Nutrition Facts** on the food label.
2. Look for **serving size** at the top of the Nutrition Facts table. The information in the table is based on this serving size.
3. Look for the **carbohydrate grams**. Carbohydrate grams include fibre, sugars and starch. Starch is not always listed. Fibre does not affect your blood sugar.

Subtract the fibre grams from the carbohydrate grams. This equals the amount of carbohydrate that will affect your blood sugar.

4. How many carbohydrate choices are in the serving size? (1 carbohydrate choice is about 15 grams carbohydrate)

### Old Mill

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 bagel (85 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 220	
Fat 1.5 g	2%
Saturated 0.3 g	
+ Trans 0 g	2%
Cholesterol 0 mg	0%
Sodium 430 mg	18%
Carbohydrate 39 g	13%
Fibre 4 g	15%
Sugars 3 g	
Protein 9g	

1. Serving size: 1 bagel
2. Carbohydrate grams: 39 g  
 Subtract Fibre grams: 4 g  
 = 35 grams of available carbohydrate
3. Number of carbohydrate choices is about 2

### Dempster's

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 bagel (90 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 240	
Fat 2 g	3%
Saturated 0.2 g	
+ Trans 0 g	1%
Cholesterol 0 mg	0%
Sodium 410 mg	17%
Potassium 60 mg	2%
Carbohydrate 47 g	16%
Fibre 2 g	8%
Sugars 4 g	
Protein 8 g	

1. Serving size: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Carbohydrate grams: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subtract Fibre grams: \_\_\_\_\_  
 = \_\_\_\_ grams of available carbohydrate
3. Number of carbohydrate choices is about \_\_\_\_

### Country Harvest

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1/2 bagel (56 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 150	
Fat 1 g	2%
Saturated 0.2 g	
+ Trans 0 g	1%
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 340 mg	14%
Potassium 75 mg	2%
Carbohydrate 30 g	10%
Fibre 1g	5%
Sugars 3 g	
Protein 5 g	

1. Serving size: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Carbohydrate grams: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Subtract Fibre grams: \_\_\_\_\_  
 = \_\_\_\_ grams of available carbohydrate
3. Number of carbohydrate choices is about \_\_\_\_

If I eat a whole bagel  
 = \_\_\_\_\_ grams available carbohydrate  
 Number of carbohydrate choices is about \_\_\_\_\_

## How many carbohydrates can I have?

One choice from the Carbohydrate Foods has 15 grams of carbohydrate. This is called a **“carb choice”**.

Different people need different amounts of carb choices each day. To manage your blood sugar, you need to spread your carb choices out evenly at meals and snacks.

## How many carb choices do I include at each meal or snack?

These are general guidelines for healthy eating. Ask your dietitian about how many carb choices are right for you.

### **Small appetites:**

- include 3 carb choices (45 grams of carbohydrate) at each meal
- include 1 carb choice (15 grams of carbohydrate) at each snack (if needed)

### **Medium appetites:**

- include 4 carb choices (60 grams of carbohydrate) at each meal
- include 1 carb choice (15 grams of carbohydrate) at each snack (if needed)

### **Large appetite:**

- include 5 carb choices (75 grams of carbohydrate) at each meal
- include 1 to 2 carb choices (15 to 30 grams of carbohydrate) at each snack (if needed)

Use the chart on page 12 in this handout to help you find out how many choices to include each day from all of the food groups in the **Diabetes Food Guide**.

<b>Food Group</b>	<b>Small Appetite (1200 calories)</b>	<b>Medium Appetite (1500 calories)</b>	<b>Large Appetite (1800 calories)</b>
	<b>Number of choices each day</b>	<b>Number of choices each day</b>	<b>Number of choices each day</b>
<b>Grains and Starches</b>	5	8	9
<b>Fruits</b>	3	3	4
<b>Milk and Milk Alternatives</b>	2	2	3
<b>Vegetables</b>	5	5	6
<b>Meat and Alternatives</b>	5	5	6
<b>Fats</b>	4	5	5



The shaded areas show the food groups that have carbohydrate foods

## Small Meal Sample Menu – Day 1

Meal	Food/Drink	Small Meal	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb	Food Group
<b>Breakfast</b>	Egg (cooked without fat)	1			Meat & Alternatives
	Bacon	1 slice			Fats & Oils
	Whole wheat toast	1 slice	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Tangerine	1	1	15	Fruits
<b>Lunch</b>	Meat sandwich:				
	- Bread, whole grain	2 slices	2	30	Grains & Starches
	- roast beef	2 oz			Meat & Alternatives
	- light mayonnaise	1 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
	- lettuce	2 large leaves			Vegetables
	Radishes	3			Vegetables
	Celery	2 stalks			Vegetables
	Cucumber	2 inches			Vegetables
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
<b>Dinner</b>	Spaghetti, whole wheat	1 cup	2	30	Grains & Starches
	Tomato/meat sauce	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	1	15	Fruits/Meat & Alternatives
	Vegetables	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup			Vegetables
	Salad	unlimited			Vegetables
	Salad dressing	1 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
<b>Snacks, if needed (in between a meal or at bedtime)</b>	Apple	1 medium	1	15	Fruits

## Large Meal Sample Menu – Day 1

Meal	Food/Drink	Large Meal	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb	Food Group
<b>Breakfast</b>	Egg (cooked without fat) Bacon Whole wheat toast Margarine Skim or 1% milk Tangerine	1 1 slice 3 slices 2 tsp 1 cup 1	  3  1 1	  45  15 15	Meat & Alternatives Fats & Oils Grains & Starches Fats & Oils Milk & Alternatives Fruits
<b>Lunch</b>	Meat sandwich: - Bread, whole grain - roast beef - light mayonnaise - lettuce Radishes Pear Skim or 1% milk	 3 slices 3 oz 1 Tbsp 2 large leaves 3 1 1 cup	 3    1 1	 45    15 15	Grains & Starches Meat & Alternatives Fats & Oils Vegetables Vegetables Fruits Milk & Alternatives
<b>Dinner</b>	Spaghetti, whole wheat Tomato/meat sauce Vegetables Salad Salad dressing Cantaloupe Skim or 1% milk	1 cup $\frac{3}{4}$ cup $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unlimited 1 Tbsp 1 cup 1 cup	2 1    1 1	30 15    15 15	Grains & Starches Fruits/Meat & Alternatives Vegetables Vegetables Fats & Oils Fruits Milk & Alternatives
<b>Snacks, if needed (in between a meal or at bedtime)</b>	Plain cookies	2	1	15	Grains & Starches



## Small Meal Sample Menu – Day 2

Meal	Food/Drink	Small Meal	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb	Food Group
<b>Breakfast</b>	Oatmeal	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Whole wheat toast	1 slice	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Peanut butter	1 Tbsp			Meat & Alternatives
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
<b>Lunch</b>	Vegetable soup	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Sandwich:				
	- bread, whole grain	1 slice	1	15	Grains & Starches
	- salmon, canned	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup			Meat & Alternatives
	- light mayonnaise	2 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Tomato	$\frac{1}{2}$ medium			Vegetables
<b>Dinner</b>	Onion, sliced	2			Vegetables
	Plum	2	1	15	Fruits
	Chicken or beef	3 oz.			Meat & Alternatives
	Mashed potatoes	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Vegetables	1 cup			Vegetables
	Gravy	2 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
<b>Snacks, if needed (in between a meal or at bedtime)</b>	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Nectarine	1	1	15	Fruits
	Low fat yogurt	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Pear	1 medium	1	15	Fruits

## Large Meal Sample Menu – Day 2

Meal	Food/Drink	Large Meal	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb	Food Group
<b>Breakfast</b>	Oatmeal	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Whole wheat toast	2 slices	2	30	Grains & Starches
	Peanut butter	2 Tbsp			Meat & Alternatives
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Blueberries	1 cup	1	15	Fruits
<b>Lunch</b>	Vegetable soup	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Sandwich:				
	- bread, whole grain	2 slices	2	30	Grains & Starches
	- salmon, canned	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup			Meat & Alternatives
	- light mayonnaise	1 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
	Tomato	$\frac{1}{2}$ medium			Vegetables
	Onion, sliced	3			Vegetables
<b>Dinner</b>	Plum	2	1	15	Fruits
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Chicken or beef	4 oz.			Meat & Alternatives
	Mashed potatoes	1 cup	2	30	Grains & Starches
	Vegetables	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup			Vegetables
<b>Snacks, if needed (in between a meal or at bedtime)</b>	Gravy	4 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Nectarine	2	2	30	Fruits
	Low fat yogurt	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Popcorn, low fat (popped)	3 cups	1	15	Grains & Starches

## Small Meal Sample Menu – Day 3

Meal	Food/Drink	Small Meal	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb	Food Group
<b>Breakfast</b>	Waffle	1	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Syrup, light	1 Tbsp			Extra
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Honeydew melon	1 cup	1	15	Fruits
	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
<b>Lunch</b>	Salad:				
	- Lettuce	1 cup			Vegetables
	- Cucumber	½ cup			Vegetables
	- Tomato	½ medium			Vegetables
	- Egg	1			Meat & Alternatives
	- Low fat cheese	1 oz.			Meat & Alternatives
	- Salad dressing	1 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
	Melba toast, whole wheat	4 pieces	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Banana	1 small			Fruits
	Low fat yogurt	¾ cup			Milk & Alternatives
<b>Dinner</b>	Ham	3 oz.			Meat & Alternatives
	Sweet potato	2/3 cup	2	30	Grains & Starches
	Broccoli	1 cup			Vegetables
	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Pineapple, ring	2 slices	1	15	Fruits
<b>Snacks, if needed (in between a meal or at bedtime)</b>	Popcorn, low fat (popped)	3 cups	1	15	Grains & Starches

## Large Meal Sample Menu – Day 3

Meal	Food/Drink	Large Meal	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb	Food Group
<b>Breakfast</b>	Waffle	3	3	45	Grains & Starches
	Syrup, light	2 Tbsp			Extra
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Honeydew melon	1 cup	1	15	Fruits
	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
<b>Lunch</b>	Salad:				
	- Lettuce	1 cup			Vegetables
	- Cucumber	½ cup			Vegetables
	- Tomato	½ medium			Vegetables
	- Egg	1			Meat & Alternatives
	- Low fat cheese	1 oz.			Meat & Alternatives
	- Salad dressing	1 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
	Melba toast, whole wheat	8 pieces	2	30	Grains & Starches
	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Banana	1 large	2	30	Fruits
	Low fat yogurt	¾ cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
<b>Dinner</b>	Ham	4 oz.			Meat & Alternatives
	Sweet potato	1 cup	3	45	Grains & Starches
	Broccoli	1 cup			Vegetables
	Margarine	2 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Pineapple, ring	2 slices	1	15	Fruits
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
<b>Snacks, if needed (in between a meal or at bedtime)</b>	Pretzel sticks	15	1	15	Grains & Starches

## Small Meal Sample Menu – Day 4

Meal	Food/Drink	Small Meal	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb	Food Group
<b>Breakfast</b>	Bran flakes	½ cup	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Raisins	2 Tbsp	1	15	Fruits
<b>Lunch</b>	Chicken on a bun:				
	- Chicken	2 oz.	2	30	Meat & Alternatives
	- Bun	1			Grains & Starches
	- Mayonnaise, low fat	1 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
	- Lettuce	2 large leaves			Vegetable
	- Tomato	2 slices	1	15	Vegetable
	Mango	½			Fruits
<b>Dinner</b>	Fish	3 oz.	2	30	Meat & Alternatives
	Rice	2/3 cup			Grains & Starches
	Beans, green or yellow	1 cup			Vegetables
	Margarine	1 tsp			Fats & Oils
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
<b>Snacks, if needed (in between a meal or at bedtime)</b>	Peach	1 large	1	15	Fruits

## Large Meal Sample Menu – Day 4

Meal	Food/Drink	Large Meal	# Carb Choices	Grams of Carb	Food Group
<b>Breakfast</b>	Bran flakes	1 cup	2	30	Grains & Starches
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
	Raisins	2 Tbsp	1	15	Fruits
	Toast, whole wheat		1	15	Grains & Starches
	Margarine				Fats & Oils
<b>Lunch</b>	Chicken on a bun:				
	- Chicken	2 oz.	2	30	Meat & Alternatives
	- Bun	1			Grains & Starches
	- Mayonnaise, low fat	1 Tbsp			Fats & Oils
	- Lettuce	2 large leaves			Vegetable
	- Tomato	2 slices	2	30	Vegetable
	Mango	1			Fruits
	Yogurt, low fat fruit	¾ cup	1	15	Milk & Alternatives
<b>Dinner</b>	Fish	3 oz.	3	45	Meat & Alternatives
	Rice	1 cup			Grains & Starches
	Beans, green or yellow	1 cup			Vegetables
	Margarine	2 tsp	1	15	Fats & Oils
	Grapes	15			Fruits
	Skim or 1% milk	1 cup			Milk & Alternatives
<b>Snacks, if needed (in between a meal or at bedtime)</b>	Crackers, soda	6	1	15	Grains & Starches
	Cheese	1 oz.			Meat & Alternatives

## Snacks

Each snack is 1 carb choice (equal to 15 grams of carbohydrate):

- ½ sandwich
- 6 soda crackers with 1 oz cheese or 1 Tbsp peanut butter
- ¾ cup low fat, no sugar added fruit yogurt
- 3 cups of popped low fat popcorn
- 14 baked tortilla chips with ¼ cup salsa
- 1 cup low fat milk (add cocoa and artificial sweetener if desired)
- 1 small to medium fruit with 1 oz cheese
- 2 plain cookies (digestives, arrowroot, cinnamon snaps)
- 1 cup vegetable soup with 6 soda crackers
- salad (lettuce with red or green pepper, cucumber) with 1 Tbsp low calorie dressing, 1 Tbsp sunflower seeds and 15 grapes
- 15 pretzel sticks

## **What is my plan for eating well with diabetes?**

Check off what you are currently doing. See what is missing. This may help you to come up with a plan for healthy eating.

- ☐ Eat 3 meals a day at regular times. Eating at regular times will help your body control blood sugar levels. Space meals 4 to 6 hours apart. You may benefit from including a healthy snack.
- ☐ Eat a variety of foods but try to eat about the same amount of carbohydrate at the same time each day.
- ☐ Eat small servings of food from the Fats and the Meat and Alternatives food groups. Eating large servings can increase your weight and cholesterol level. Maintaining a healthy weight may help with blood sugar control and is healthier for your heart.
- ☐ Choose high fibre choices. Fibre may help you feel full and may help in controlling your blood sugar levels and cholesterol levels.
- ☐ Limit sugars and sweets such as sugar, regular pop, desserts, candies, jams and honey. These foods may cause your blood sugar level to go higher. Artificial sweeteners may be useful.



## Goal setting

When goal setting, it is important to be very specific and to answer the following questions:

What? How much? When? How often?

### For example:

What: I will have vegetables

How much: 1 cup

When: at lunch

How often: 4 times a week

Write your goal below:

What: \_\_\_\_\_

How much: \_\_\_\_\_

When: \_\_\_\_\_

How often: \_\_\_\_\_

Confidence in your ability to make that change is also important. If your confidence is low, you may struggle to reach your goal. If your confidence is high, you will have better success. Rate your confidence on a scale with “1” being the lowest and “10” being the highest. If your confidence is 7 or higher, you are more likely to reach your goal. If your confidence is less than 7, think of some ways you can overcome the barriers.

My confidence level (from 1 to 10) is: \_\_\_\_\_

Barriers I might have: \_\_\_\_\_

Ways I can overcome those barriers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Resources

### Website:

[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

### Books:

#### **Choice Menus**

Margorie Hollands & Margaret Howard  
Harper Collins Publishers  
ISBN 10:0-00-200843-2

#### **More Choice Menus**

Margorie Hollands & Margaret Howard  
Macmillan Canada  
ISBN 0-7715-7368-5

#### **Meals for Good Health**

Karen Graham  
Paper Birch Publishing  
ISBN 0-9696770-7-3

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## Food diary

	Food/Drink	Amount	Food Group	# Carb Choices	My Carb Targets