

VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute!

Eating Right When You Have Diabetes

Contrary to what you may have heard, there is no actual “diet” for people with diabetes. The foods recommended to control your blood glucose (or sugar) are good for those with diabetes – and everyone else. This means you and your family can eat the same healthy foods at mealtime. However, you do need to carefully monitor the total amounts of carbohydrates you consume each day. Carbohydrates have the greatest influence on blood glucose levels. Most people with diabetes also have to monitor total fat consumption and protein intake.

Find a balance

To keep your blood glucose levels in check, you need to make healthy food choices, exercise regularly and take the medicines your doctor prescribes.

- Stick with healthy carbohydrates like whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat milk. Whole-grain breads and cereals, brown rice, beans, lentils, potatoes and corn tortillas are good choices.
- Decrease saturated fats by choosing lean meats and poultry, and low-fat or non-fat dairy products.
- Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners.



- Eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day.
- Get in the habit of reading food labels to find out the real portion sizes for the foods you enjoy. And do the math. If you double up on a special treat one day, subtract that from your next day’s diet planning.
- Balance calories from foods and beverages with physical activity to manage body weight.

And remember to relax and enjoy your meals. That way, you’ll be more likely to savor the flavor of foods and less likely to overeat from stress. Your nerves will be glad you did. ■

Free advice for managing your diabetes

The medical expenses of people with diabetes are approximately 2.3 times higher than expenses for someone without diabetes. If you have diabetes, or are at risk for developing the disease, there’s a lot you can do to improve your health and, ultimately, lower your health expenses – starting with your eating and exercise habits.

Economic Costs of Diabetes in the U.S. Diabetes Care. Volume 31. Number 3. March 2008.