

Tips for making healthy food choices

A diabetic diet is all about balance and good choices. It works best when you eat a variety of foods in the right portions the same times each day. You do not have to give up your favorite foods.

Your food choices should come from three groups:

- Carbohydrates (carbs): 45 to 65 percent of daily calories
- Proteins: 15 to 20 percent of daily calories
- Fats: 20 to 35 percent of daily calories

Eating the right foods can help keep your blood sugar in the normal range. That can give you energy to do the everyday things you enjoy. So, how can you make sure to get enough of each food type every day?

Imagine your plate divided into quarters. Use it to control your portions.

- Fill 1/4 of your plate with carbs (rice, whole grains, potatoes, pasta, corn and peas).
- Fill 1/4 of your plate with lean protein (meat, fish, poultry and tofu).
- Fill 1/2 of your plate with non-starchy veggies (green leafy vegetables, broccoli, tomatoes, cauliflower, cucumbers, carrots and salads).

Now you have an idea about how to fill your plate. Let's look at some options in each group.

Carbs such as fruits, whole grains and vegetables are vital parts of your diet. Many carbs contain fiber that gives energy and a sense of feeling full. There are three main types of carbs: starches, sugar and fiber. Finding a good balance of all three is vital. If you're not careful, these foods are most likely to drive up your blood sugar.

More than half of your daily diet should be filled with vegetables, whole grains and fruits.

It is best to eat sweets and snacks rarely. You can reduce eating other carbs on days you want to splurge. Some good choices you can make to help meet your nutritional needs include:

- Breads — whole grains are best
- Vegetables — from a rainbow of different colors
- Fruits
- Brown rice or whole wheat pasta
- Beans and legumes
- Raw nuts and seeds

- Low-fat dairy products

SMALL, EASY STEPS

- Substitute white flour breads and pasta with those made of whole wheat and whole grains
- Substitute a cup of orange juice with a piece of fresh fruit which includes good fiber

Proteins are your fish, poultry and meat items. Milk products also contain protein, as do most beans, nuts and seeds. They are needed for energy and to keep your body in good shape. Here is a list of some high protein foods:

- Beef — choose lean cuts
- Chicken — go skinless to reduce fat
- Pork
- Fish — bake, grill or broil instead of frying
- Beans
- Cheese
- Eggs
- Milk
- Nuts

SMALL, EASY STEPS

- Choose a 6-inch roast beef or oven-roasted chicken sub in place of a 6-inch tuna sub loaded with fatty mayonnaise.
- Gradually move from whole milk products to 2%, then 1%, and finally fat-free milk and yogurts.

Fats should make up the smallest portion of your daily diet. Fats are found in many processed foods. Make sure you read food labels. Some fats are better than others. In fact, we need fats in our diet to keep our body working well.

Unhealthy fats are trans and saturated. Healthy fats are monosaturated and polyunsaturated. Healthy fats are found in:

- Olive oil
- Vegetable oils
- Nuts and seeds
- Fatty, cold-water fish (salmon, mackerel and herring)

These items also contain essential fatty acids. Omega-3 and Omega-6 can help lower cholesterol. Even a very small amount of fat has a large amount of calories. Foods that include

unhealthy fats are: butter, ice cream, coconut oil, cheese, cakes, cookies, crackers, chips, candy and some margarines.

SMALL, EASY STEPS

- Read labels and substitute healthy fats in place of unhealthy fats.
- Try cooking with olive oil or canola oil in place of butter or margarine.
- Eat peanut butter on apple pieces or celery stalks to get protein, carbs and fiber with your fat.

Some people with diabetes use *exchanges*. These are simple ways to plan your meals. A full day of meals might include three exchanges of each: whole grains, protein, dairy, vegetables and fruits.

A dietitian can help you with diet planning and questions about certain foods and portion sizes. If you have trouble finding a dietitian, call toll-free 1-888-830-4300 to speak with a Simply diabetes care manager. People who are deaf or hard of hearing should dial 711. A diabetes case manager can help you connect with a dietitian who can work with you. Here are some ideas to get you started making diet changes:

- Eat the same amount around the same times each day.
- Use variety and spice things up with herbs, seasonings, lemon juice and low-sodium soy sauce.
- Be creative.
- Keep telling yourself you can do it.
- Use all the resources you can.
- Reward yourself.

Sources:

American Diabetes Association
diabetes.org

Diabetes Health
diabeteshealth.com

American Heart Association Diabetes Subpage
heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Diabetes/Diabetes_UCM_001091_SubHomePage.jsp,
accessed November 8, 2013.

Simply Healthcare Plans, Inc. follows Federal civil rights laws. We don't discriminate against people because of their:

- Race
- National origin
- Disability
- Color
- Age
- Sex or gender identity

Do you need help with your health care, talking with us, or reading what we send you? Call us toll free at 1-844-406-2396 for Florida Medicaid, 1-877-440-3738 for Long-Term Care or TTY 711 to get this for free in other languages or formats.

¿Necesita ayuda con su cuidado de la salud, para hablar con nosotros o leer lo que le enviamos? Llámenos a la línea gratuita al 1-844-406-2396 para Florida Medicaid, 1-877-440-3738 para Long-Term Care o TTY 711 para recibir esto gratuitamente en otros idiomas o formatos.

Èske ou bezwen èd ak swen sante ou, èd pou pale ak nou, oswa pou li sa nou voye ba ou? Rele nou gratis nan 1-844-406-2396 pou Florida Medicaid, 1-877-440-3738 pou Long-Term Care oswa TTY 711 pou w jwenn sa gratis nan lòt lang oswa nan lòt fòm.

Vous avez besoin d'aide pour vos soins de santé, pour communiquer avec nous ou pour lire les documents que nous vous envoyons ? Appelez-nous à notre numéro gratuit 1-844-406-2396 pour Florida Medicaid, 1-877-440-3738 pour Long-Term Care ou TTY 711 afin d'obtenir ceci gratuitement dans d'autres langues ou formats.

Ha bisogno di supporto con l'assistenza sanitaria, per parlare con noi oppure leggere ciò che le abbiamo inviato? Ci contatti al numero gratuito 1-844-406-2396 per Florida Medicaid, 1-877-440-3738 per Long-Term Care o TTY 711 per ottenere supporto senza costi aggiuntivi in altre lingue o formati.

Вам нужна помощь с медицинским обслуживанием, консультацией или материалами, которые мы вам прислали? Позвоните нам по бесплатному номеру 1-844-406-2396 в случае Florida Medicaid, 1-877-440-3738 в случае Long-Term Care или TTY 711 чтобы получить эти материалы на другом языке или в другом формате.