

## Practical Tips for Healthful Eating

Food plays a key role in our lives and provides more than energy, vitamins, and minerals. We share food with friends and family. We shop together, cook together, and eat together. We meet for lunch, dinner, or coffee.

For some people, dealing with food is the toughest part of having diabetes. You may ask, “what can I eat?” The good news is you can still eat the foods you enjoy.

### What you can learn from this brochure:

- how to fix healthful foods at home
- how to make better choices when you're eating out

### Choosing Healthful Foods

No matter where you eat, home or away, there are healthful food choices you can make.

#### Vegetables and fruits

- Choose a variety of colorful fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables and fruits.
- Non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, tomatoes, green beans and carrots are low in calories and full of vitamins and fiber. Have them for snacks and with meals.

#### Dairy products

- Choose lower-fat dairy products.
- If you're using whole milk, try 2% milk for a few weeks. Then try switching to 1% milk. It usually takes about three weeks to adjust to the change.
- Lower-fat cheeses work fine in most recipes, and they taste great on a sandwich, salad, or in a burrito.
- Try low-fat frozen yogurt or light ice cream instead of full-fat ice cream.

#### Cereals, breads and starchy vegetables

- Include whole-grain products like oatmeal, whole wheat bread, corn tortillas, and brown rice.

#### Beans, fish, chicken, and meats

- Try a “meatless main dish.” Have beans or a soy burger in place of meat or chicken.
- Include fish and other seafood in your meals at least twice a week.
- Try white meat chicken and turkey. It has less fat than the dark meat.
- Choose lean meats like round and loin cuts. Examples are pork loin, round roast and sirloin.

#### Choose reduced-fat and reduced-calorie toppings

- Try light or fat-free salad dressings, mayonnaise, sour cream, or yogurt.

#### Choose liquid fats and oils instead of solid fats.

- Liquid oils such as canola, sunflower or olive oil are more healthful than solid fats like butter, margarine, shortening or lard. For all fats, keep your portions small. Fats can add calories that may cause weight gain.

### Tips for Fixing Healthful Foods at Home

Fixing food at home can be easy, fast, fun, and tasty. It takes a little planning and some new ideas to make it happen.

#### Save time by planning ahead

Think about what you'd like to have for your meals before heading to the store. Know how many meals you plan to fix at home and how often you will eat out.

- **Make a shopping list and stick to it!** This saves time and money because you buy only what you need for that week with one trip.
- **Try to do some cooking on the week-end or when you have more time.** Roast a chicken for Sunday dinner. Have the leftovers for dinner later in the week and make chicken sandwiches for lunch.

## Cooking tips

- **Take the skin off chicken and turkey before cooking.**
- **Trim all visible fat off meats before cooking.**
- **Cook without adding extra fat.**
  - Roasting allows the fat to drip out of meats. Broiling, grilling, poaching, and steaming are also great ways to cook for less fat and calories.
  - Use nonstick pans and cooking sprays.
  - Steam vegetables instead of frying or sautéing in oil or butter.

## Tips for Eating Out

Eating out is a way of life today. Here are some tips for eating well away from home.

### Fast food

- **Order the smallest sandwich and fries on the menu.** This may be the junior or child portion.

### Quick Meal Ideas

There are lots of ways to have a great meal without much cooking at all! Try a few of these meal ideas:

- Pick up a ready-to-eat turkey breast for the main course, a bag of ready-to-microwave spinach, and some whole wheat pita bread. You have an easy and healthful meal.
- Make a quick black bean soup. Open a can of black beans and mix in a pan with frozen onions and peppers. Add spices like chili powder and cumin and cook for fifteen minutes to blend the flavors. Serve it with a bag of salad and a whole grain roll. Peel an orange or have light yogurt for later.
- Buy a rotisserie chicken for the main course and microwave some potatoes and a frozen vegetable for a fast and healthful meal.
- For a one-dish meal: Cook pasta until almost done. Then add frozen vegetables like broccoli and cook for a few minutes until done. After draining, top with your favorite sauce.

- **Ask for sandwiches without mayo and cheese.** Many places now have sauces lower in fat and calories.
- **Split an order of fries with family.** Or ask for fruit or salad in place of fries if that is an option.
- **Choose sugar-free beverages such as diet soda, unsweetened tea or water.**
- **Healthful and delicious main course salads are another option at fast food places.** If there's a choice, go for the low-fat salad dressing.
- **Choose turkey, chicken, lean roast beef, or grilled vegetables for subs and sandwiches.**

### Restaurant eating

- **Don't be afraid to ask questions about the food.** If your server doesn't know the answers, ask him to check with the chef. Here are some questions you might want to ask.
  - Can the item be grilled or broiled instead of fried?
  - Which dishes have more vegetables?
  - Can a dish be stir-fried with less fat?
  - Which soup is made with broth instead of cream?
  - Can you get a baked potato, salad, or vegetables instead of fries?
- **Choose items that are baked, broiled, grilled, or poached instead of fried.** Watch for clues on the menu. "Crispy" or "breaded" means fried.

- To make a quick quesadilla, put lower-fat cheese between two corn or whole wheat tortillas. If you have leftover beans, chicken, or vegetables, you can add those too. Heat a nonstick skillet, add the stuffed tortilla and cook until the cheese starts melting. Flip it over and cook the other side. Slice into wedges like a pizza and top with salsa.
- Sprinkle a salad with canned chicken, tuna, or salmon. Add some bread or fruit for another quick meal idea.
- Make a fast pizza at home. Top a whole grain pita with bottled pasta sauce, lots of herbs, and a thin sprinkling of part-skim mozzarella. Add some green peppers, onions, mushrooms, or low-fat pepperoni for extra flavor. Toast on a rack in the oven or a toaster oven.
- Have a frozen-dinner with some bagged salad and a piece of fruit.

**Convenience foods have more salt in them than fresh foods. If you have a choice, eat the fresh foods instead of frozen or canned.**

## Ask the Diabetes Advisor

**Question:** I want to take my lunch to work more often, but life is so hectic. It seems I never have time to get a lunch packed. Do you have any ideas for packing quick lunches?

Erma C., age 32 • type 1 diabetes

**Answer:** Make a sandwich in the evening. Pack some of your favorite raw veggies, a piece of fruit, and a sugar-free drink, along with your sandwich. In the morning, just reach into the refrigerator for your bag lunch. Also make extra food when you cook. Pack up leftovers in a small container for lunch the next day.

- **Ask that sauces and salad dressings be served on the side.** They add flavor but also add calories and fat. Dip your fork into sauces and salad dressings, then spear a piece of meat or lettuce for a little sauce or dressing with each bite. Use less sour cream or butter on your baked potato or vegetables.
- **Order the smallest meat portion.** A grilled chicken breast is a better choice than half a chicken. Or choose a filet instead of a 12-ounce steak. Order pasta from the appetizer list rather than the larger dinner portion. The smaller portion will save you fat, calories, and money.

## Keep the pleasure in eating

Doing the same thing every day can be boring. Keep your food flavorful and fun and your mealtime setting relaxed so you can enjoy your meal. Here are a few tips to try:

- **Try new foods and recipes.** Check out some low-calorie cookbooks from the library or go to [www.diabetes.org/recipes](http://www.diabetes.org/recipes) for new ideas and tastes.
  - **Add colorful fruits and vegetables to your meals.** Use fruit as a dessert.
  - **Try dried or fresh herbs for seasoning and flavor in place of fat or salt.** Basil, chives, cilantro, dill, marjoram, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, tarragon, and thyme are tasty choices. Crush dried herbs before using. If you're using fresh herbs, remove any tough stems, rinse, dry and chop. A rule of thumb is to use three times more fresh herbs than dried.
    - Add basil or oregano to a bottled pasta sauce to brighten the flavor.
- Try fresh cilantro on sandwiches with a slice of tomato.
  - Dill is great in tuna or potato salad. Make the salad with low-fat mayo, a little fat-free plain yogurt, and lots of chopped celery and onion, and dill.
  - Add lemon pepper to fish or chicken.
  - Try a garlic and herb seasoning for beef, pork, or chicken.
  - Chili powder can be added to soups, salads, or vegetables.
- **Be mindful of what you're eating.** Sometimes you can be distracted by the T.V., phone, or reading and not realize how much you've eaten. Tune into your hunger so you stop eating when you're full. Enjoy the taste of your food by slowing down.
  - **Play music while you eat if it helps you unwind and relax.**
  - **Use meal times to connect with others.**

- **If portions are large, eat just half of your meal.** Take home the rest for lunch another day. Put the extra portion in a take home box before you dig in.
- **Think about splitting a dish with a friend.** You can each order a salad and share a main course.
- **Try ethnic cuisines for a new taste treat.**
  - At **Thai** restaurants try steamed mussels, kebobs, Thai shrimp soup, Thai salads, curries, Thai chicken with vegetables, garlic shrimp, or beef with basil and vegetables. Choose a small portion of steamed rice instead of fried rice or noodles.
  - At **Mexican** places try to limit the chips you eat to a handful. If that's hard, ask your server to take the basket away. Lower-fat choices are fajitas and soft tacos stuffed with chicken, beef, or seafood, and loaded with vegetables. Hold the cheese and sour cream or ask for them on the side. Smaller portions of Mexican rice, black or pinto beans, and salsa are good sides.
  - For **Italian** meals, choose minestrone or a bean and pasta soup, steamed clams, or a cold seafood salad as a first course. Alfredo sauces are high in saturated fat and calories so choose a light tomato sauce, a red or white clam sauce, or shrimp marinara. Or try other main course options such as chicken or veal cacciatore, veal or chicken piccata sautéed in olive oil, shrimp scampi cooked in olive oil, or grilled fish.

## Planning a Steakhouse Meal

At every restaurant there are many choices. Some choices are lower in fat and calories than others. Here are some foods that you may find on a steakhouse menu. Place a check next to the foods you'd like for a meal.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> sirloin steak | <input type="checkbox"/> steamed veggies    | <input type="checkbox"/> sour cream                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prime rib     | <input type="checkbox"/> house salad        | <input type="checkbox"/> ranch dressing            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> baked potato  | <input type="checkbox"/> lemon sorbet       | <input type="checkbox"/> olive oil                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> roll          | <input type="checkbox"/> lemon meringue pie | <input type="checkbox"/> fat-free Italian dressing |

You have many options for planning your meal.

- Eat half the sirloin steak along with the baked potato and salad. Ask for sour cream and fat free salad dressing on the side and just add a little. You could even share a slice of lemon pie with a friend. This 500 calorie dinner has fewer calories and less than 1/2 the fat of the prime rib alone.

By eating 1/2 the sirloin steak, you'd have leftovers to add to a salad the next day for a quick lunch or dinner.

- Another option is to enjoy a roll in place of a baked potato or ask for a double portion of steamed vegetables instead of salad. Dip your roll in a small amount of olive oil instead of butter for less saturated fat. The options are unlimited if you watch your portion sizes.
- By skipping dessert or having a fruit cup to top off your meal, you would save even more calories and fat.

Below are 2 different meal options with about the same number of calories.

Meal 1	calories	grams of fat	Meal 2	calories	grams of fat
1/2 sirloin steak	216	8	1/2 sirloin steak	216	8
1/2 small slice lemon pie	136	5	1/2 cup lemon sorbet	136	0
1 small baked potato	80	0	1 small roll	85	0
2 Tbsp sour cream	50	5	1 tsp olive oil	40	5
House salad with fat-free Italian dressing	35	0	Steamed vegetables	20	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>517 calories</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>497 calories</b>	<b>13</b>

## Real-Life Stories from People with Diabetes

When we had a party at work, I had a small piece of cake. My coworkers kept pushing me to eat more. "Here, have another piece of cake," they'd say. I had to learn to say that the cake was great, but I've had enough.

Erica W., age 42 • type 2 diabetes

## Ask the Diabetes Advisor

**Question:** My mom loves to cook and makes delicious Sunday lunches for the family. She makes everybody's favorite foods. She knows I love her fried chicken and macaroni and cheese. I try to just eat one serving of my favorite foods and then eat more of the greens and salad. Mama thinks I don't like her cooking anymore if I don't have seconds. How can I handle this and not hurt her feelings?

Bill O., age 35 • type 2 diabetes

**Answer:** Be sure to tell your mom how delicious her food is and how much you enjoy Sunday meals at her house. Choose a time to talk with your mom and other family members about diabetes and how smaller portions help keep your blood glucose in your target range.

## For More Information

To get more information about diabetes, contact the American Diabetes Association.

- Call 1-800-DIABETES (342-2383) Ask for free copies of:
  - Diabetes Advisor, Number 5, *Checking Blood Glucose: What It Can Do For You*
  - Diabetes Advisor, Number 8, *Making Physical Activity Part of Your Routine*
  - Diabetes Advisor, Number 9, *Sweets and Desserts for People with Diabetes*
  - Diabetes Advisor, Number 11, *Eating for Health*
 and other brochures in the Diabetes Advisor series.
- Go to [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org).



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