



Daily Meal Planning Guide

When you find out you have diabetes there are so many things to learn! One of the first things you may want to know is – what can I eat? Choosing healthy foods can help you control your blood glucose. A daily meal plan is an important part of your diabetes management, along with physical activity, blood glucose checks, and often diabetes medications.

There is no one meal plan that works for everybody with diabetes. This guide will provide you with three ways that may help you plan your meals:

- **Balance Your Plate:** Many people with diabetes like to keep meal planning simple. This food plan can help you to easily portion out your food.
- **Food List for Meal Planning and Personal Meal Plan:** If you want to count servings of food and follow a plan that is good for your diabetes too, check out the *Food List for Meal Planning* and the *Personal Meal Plan*. This plan will help you know how much of carbohydrate, protein, and fat you can eat each day.
- **Carbohydrate Counting:** There are many carbohydrate foods to enjoy, including grains, fruits, vegetables, milk products and those with sugar. Carbohydrate foods raise your blood glucose level more than proteins and fats. This meal planning approach helps you to keep track of how much carbohydrate you eat at your meals and snacks. Many people who take insulin like to use this plan.

Some key things to remember no matter which meal plan you choose to follow:

- Keep your food intake consistent from day to day
- Make half your grains whole grains
- Choose whole fruits and vegetables often
- Go with lean protein
- Get your calcium-rich foods
- Know your limits on fats, salt, and sugars
- Choose water instead of sugary beverages, juice "drinks", and sports drinks

Checking your blood glucose will help you to see how your food choices affect your blood glucose control.

A Registered Dietitian (RD) can help you make a meal plan that best meets your needs and lifestyle. Ask your healthcare provider, diabetes educator, hospital, or local diabetes association for the names of RDs in your area who work with people that have diabetes.

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Sample Meal Plan

Just count carb. servings

The table below shows sample meal plans, by number of servings, for different calorie levels. Ask your RD, diabetes educator, or healthcare provider which plan works best for you. Each plan provides about half of its calories from carbohydrate and less than 25% of calories from fat, based on choosing fat-free milk and low-fat meats (Lean Meat Group) and cheeses.

	Calories per day*			Carb. Servings	
	1200	1600	1800	2000	2200
Carbohydrates					
Starches	5	7	8	9	10
Fruits	3	3	3	4	4
Milk	2	3	3	3	3
Sweets, Desserts, & Other Carbohydrate					
Nonstarchy Vegetables	3	4	5	6	6
Meat & Meat Substitutes	4 oz	6 oz	6 oz	7 oz	8 oz
Fats	3	5	6	6	7

1 Carb. serving = 1 slice bread or bread

1 cup = milk
Potatoes/Corn
Rice/Pasta
Cereal/Grain
Beans
Fruit [1/2 cantaloupe cup of melon]
Sweets

*The numbers included in the chart are individual servings from each food list.

3-4 servings meat

All Purple All green, yellow & Red veggies you want

Alcohol - In general, 1 alcohol equivalent has about 100 calories. One alcohol equivalent is 12 ounces beer or 1 1/2 ounces distilled spirits or 5 ounces wine. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit it to 1 drink or less per day if you are a woman and 2 drinks or less per day if you are a man.

Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrate (starch and sugar) is the main nutrient in food that raises blood glucose. When you plan meals based on carbohydrate counting, count only the foods that contain carbohydrate. Use either the portion sizes shown in the Food Lists, or calculate the carbohydrate grams or choices using the bolded carbohydrate numbers at the top of each food list. If you are using a packaged food with a Nutrition Facts label, count the number of "Total Carbohydrate" grams based on the serving size listed on the label.

How much carbohydrate do you need?

Your RD can help decide how much carbohydrate you need. The amount depends on your age, weight, activity, and diabetes medications if needed.

It's important to know that...

1 carbohydrate choice = 15 grams carbohydrate

Women often need about 45-60 grams carbohydrate (3-4 choices) at each of three meals and 15 grams carbohydrate (1 choice) for snacks as needed.

Men often need 60-75 grams carbohydrate (4-5 choices) at each of three meals and 15-30 grams carbohydrate (1-2 choices) for snacks as needed.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 8 crackers (28g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories 120	Fat Calories 30
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 3.5g	5%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 0.5g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 140mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	3%
Sugar 7g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 10%	Iron 4%

Check the serving size: 8 crackers is that how much you plan to eat?

This number (28g) is the weight of the crackers, not the amount of carbohydrate in the serving.

Count total carbohydrate.

You do not need to count sugar separately because it is already counted as part of the total carbohydrate.

Burger with 2 slices of Bun = 2
serving of fries = 1
Corn on cob = 1
2-3 peaches = 1

TO CALCULATE CARBOHYDRATE CHOICES:

Divide the number of grams of total carbohydrate by 15 (because 1 carbohydrate choice = 15 grams of carbohydrate).

Total carbohydrate = 22g



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Learn About Carb Counting

You can learn to figure out how many carbohydrates you are eating every day. Ask your dietitian to teach you a technique called "carb counting." This system helps you keep track of the carbohydrates you eat at each meal. There are different ways to do carb counting. See the chart below to learn more.

Basic Carb Counting: Carbohydrate Servings

- When you count carbohydrate servings, one serving of a starch, fruit, or dairy product counts as one "carb."
- Each carb is about 15 grams of carbohydrate.
- For example:
 - 1 slice of bread = 1 starch serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate
 - 1 apple = 1 fruit serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate
 - 1 cup milk = 1 dairy serving = 15 grams of carbohydrate
- The dietitian will help you determine how many carbohydrate servings to have at each meal and snack.
- This method is a good way to get started with carb counting.

Advanced Carb Counting: Carbohydrate Grams

- When you count carbohydrate grams, you use the "Nutrition Facts" label on packaged foods. The label tells you the actual carbohydrate amount (in grams) in a food.
- A dietitian can help you determine how many grams of carbohydrate to have at each meal. You may also learn how to adjust your mealtime insulin based on your carbohydrate intake.
- This is the most accurate method of counting carbs. But it may be a little harder than counting carbohydrate servings.

Food List for Meal Planning

Key

- * Foods marked with * should be counted as 1 starch + 1 fat per serving
- ☉ Foods marked with ☉ contain more than 3 grams of dietary fiber per serving
- ! Foods marked with ! contain 480 mg or more of sodium per serving

oz= ounce
tsp= teaspoon
Tbsp= Tablespoon

Resources:
Choose Your Foods: Exchange Lists for Diabetes, American Diabetes Association and American Dietetic Association, 2007.
Beyond Rice and Beans by Lorena Drago (American Diabetes Association, 2006)

Starch

Each serving from this list contains 15 grams carbohydrate, 0-3 grams protein, 0-1 gram fat and 80 calories.

These foods are the cornerstone of a healthy eating plan. Most of their calories come from carbohydrate, a good source of energy. Many foods from this group also give you fiber, vitamins and minerals. Prepare and eat starchy foods with as little added fat as possible. Choose whole grain starches as often as you can. In general, a single serving of starch is:

- 1/2 cup of cooked cereal, grain or starchy vegetable
- 1/3 cup of cooked rice or pasta
- 1 oz of a bread product such as 1 slice of whole wheat bread
- 3/4 to 1 oz of most snack foods (some snack foods may also have extra fat).

	Serving Size
Bread	
Bagel, large (about 4 oz)	1/4 (1 oz)
*Biscuit, 2 1/2 inches across	1
Bread (whole wheat, white or rye)	1 slice (1 oz)
*Cornbread	1 3/4 inch cube (1 1/2 oz)
English muffin	1/2
Hot dog or hamburger bun	1/2 (1 oz)
Pancake	4 inches across, 1/4 inch thick (1)
Pita pocket bread (6" across)	1/2
Roll, plain, small	1 (1 oz)
Tortilla, corn or flour (6" across)	1
*Waffle	4 inch square or 4 inches across (1)
Cereals and Grains	
Cereals, cooked (oats, oatmeal)	1/2 cup
Cereals, unsweetened, ready-to-eat	3/4 cup
Couscous	1/3 cup
Granola, low-fat	1/4 cup
Pasta, cooked	1/3 cup

Starchy Vegetables	Serving Size
Breadfruit	1/4 cup small cubes
Corn, cooked	1/2 cup
Corn on cob, large	1/2 cob (5 oz)
☉ Hominy, canned	3/4 cup
☉ Peas, green, cooked	1/2 cup
Plantain, ripe	1/3 cup
Potato	
baked with skin	1/4 large (3 oz)
boiled, all kinds	1/2 cup or 1/2 medium (3 oz)
* mashed with milk and fat	1/2 cup
French fried (oven-baked)	1 cup (2 oz)
Spaghetti/pasta sauce	1/2 cup
☉ Squash, winter (acorn, butternut)	1 cup
Yam, sweet potato, plain	1/2 cup
Yucca	1/3 cup

Crackers and Snacks	Serving Size
Crackers	
*round, butter-type	6
saltines	6
Graham cracker, 2 1/2 inch square	3
Popcorn	
* ☉ with butter	3 cups
☉ lower fat or no fat added	3 cups
	3/4 oz
Pretzels	
Snack chips (tortilla chips, potato chips)	
fat-free or baked	15-20 (1/4 oz)
* regular	9-13 (1/4 oz)

Beans, Peas and Lentils	Serving Size
(Count as 1 Starch + 1 Lean Meat)	
☉ Baked beans	1/3 cup
☉ Beans, cooked (black, garbanzo, kidney, lima, navy, pinto, white)	1/2 cup
☉ Lentils, cooked (brown, green, yellow)	1/2 cup
☉ Peas, cooked (black-eyed, split)	1/2 cup

Fruits

Each serving from this list contains 15 grams carbohydrate, 0 grams fat, 0 grams protein and 60 calories.

Fruits are good sources of fiber, regardless if they are fresh, frozen, or dried. Fruit juices contain very little fiber. Choose fruits instead of juices whenever possible. When using canned fruit, choose fruit packed in its own juice or light syrup.

In general, a single serving of fruit is:

- 1/2 cup of canned or fresh fruit or unsweetened fruit juice
- 1 small fresh fruit (4 oz)
- 2 tablespoons of dried fruit

Fruit	Serving Size
Apple, unpeeled, small	1 (4-oz)
Applesauce, unsweetened	1/2 cup
Banana, extra small	1 (4 oz)
Berries	
☉ Blackberries	3/4 cup

☉ Strawberries	1 1/4 cup whole berries
Cantaloupe, small	1/3 melon or 1 cup cubed (11 oz)
Cherries, sweet fresh	12 (3 oz)
Dried fruits (blueberries, cherries, cranberries, mixed fruit, raisins)	2 Tbsp
Grapefruit, large	1/2 (11 oz)
Grapes, small	17 (3 oz)
Guava	1/2 cup
☉ Kiwi	1 (3 1/2 oz)
Mandarin oranges, canned	3/4 cup
Mango, small	1/2 fruit (5 1/2 oz) or 1/2 cup
☉ Orange, small	1 (6 1/2 oz)
Papaya	1/2 fruit or 1 cup cubed (8 oz)
Passion fruit	1/4 cup
Peaches (fresh, medium)	1 (6 oz)
Pears (fresh, large)	1/2 (4 oz)
Pineapple (fresh)	3/4 cup
Plums	3
dried (prunes)	2 (5 oz)
small	
Tamarind	1/4 cup whole or 1 oz dried
Watermelon	1 slice or 1 1/4 cups cubes (13 1/2 oz)
Fruit Juice	Serving Size
Apple, grapefruit, orange, pineapple	1/2 cup
Fruit juice blends, 100% juice,	
grape juice, prune juice	1/3 cup

Milk

Milk and yogurt are rich in calcium and protein. Choose fat-free, low-fat and reduced-fat varieties for health. They have less saturated fat and cholesterol than whole milk products.

Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk and yogurt: Each serving from this list contains 12 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 0-3 grams fat and 100 calories.

Milk, buttermilk, acidophilus milk, Lactaid	1 cup
Evaporated milk	1/2 cup
Yogurt, plain or flavored with a low calorie sweetener	3/3 cup (6 oz)

Reduced-fat (2%) milk and yogurt: Each serving from this list contains 12 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 5 grams fat and 120 calories.

Milk, acidophilus milk, kefir, Lactaid	1 cup
Yogurt, plain	3/3 cup (6 oz)

Whole milk and yogurt: Each serving from this list contains 12 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 8 grams fat and 160 calories.

Milk, buttermilk, goat's milk	1 cup
Evaporated milk	1/2 cup
Yogurt, plain	8 oz
Dairy-Like Foods	Serving Size
Chocolate milk	
fat-free	1 cup
(1 fat-free milk + 1 carbohydrate)	

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Food List for Meal Planning

Smoothies, flavored, regular (1 fat-free milk + 2 1/2 carbohydrate)	10 oz
Soy milk, regular, plain (1 carbohydrate + 1 fat)	1 cup
Yogurt	
juice blends (1 fat-free milk + 1 carbohydrate)	1 cup
with fruit, low-fat (1 fat-free milk + 1 carbohydrate)	2/3 cup (6 oz)

Sweets, Desserts, and Other Carbohydrates

Each serving from this list contains 15 grams of carbohydrate; the amount of protein, fat and calories varies. You can substitute food choices from this list for other carbohydrate-containing foods (such as those found on the Starch, Fruit or Milk lists) in your meal plan, even though these foods have added sugars or fat. The foods on this list do not have as many vitamins, minerals and fiber. Choose foods from this list less often if you are trying to lose weight. Many sugar-free, fat-free and reduced-fat products are made with ingredients that contain carbohydrate, so check the Total Carbohydrate Information on the Nutrition Facts food label.

Food	Serving Size
Brownie, small, unfrosted	1 1/4 inch square, 7/8 inch high (about 1 oz)
<i>(Count as 1 carbohydrate + 1 fat)</i>	
Cake	
frosted	2-inch square (about 1 oz)
<i>(Count as 2 carbohydrates + 1 fat)</i>	
unfrosted	2-inch square (about 1 oz)
<i>(Count as 1 carbohydrate + 1 fat)</i>	
Candy bar, chocolate/peanut	2 "fun size" bars (1 oz)
<i>(Count as 1 1/2 carbohydrates + 1 1/2 fats)</i>	
Candy, hard	3 pieces
Cookies	
chocolate chip	2 cookies (2 1/4 inch across)
<i>(Count as 1 carbohydrate + 2 fats)</i>	
vanilla wafer	5 cookies
<i>(Count as 1 carbohydrate + 1 fat)</i>	
Doughnut, cake, plain	1 medium (1 1/2 oz)
<i>(Count as 1 1/2 carbohydrates + 2 fats)</i>	
Flan (caramel custard)	1/2 cup
<i>(Count as 2 carbohydrates)</i>	
Fruit juice bars, frozen, 100% juice	1 bar (3 oz)
Gelatin, regular	1/2 cup
Granola or snack bar, regular or low-fat	1 bar (1 oz)
<i>(Count as 1 1/2 carbohydrates)</i>	
Hot chocolate, regular	1 envelope added to 8 oz water
<i>(Count as 1 carbohydrate + 1 fat)</i>	
Ice cream	
light and no-sugar added	1/2 cup
<i>(Count as 1 carbohydrate + 1 fat)</i>	
regular	1/2 cup
<i>(Count as 1 carbohydrate + 2 fats)</i>	
Jam or jelly, regular	1 Tbsp

Muffin (4 oz)	1/4 muffin (1 oz)
<i>(Count as 1 carbohydrate + 1/2 fat)</i>	
Pie, commercially prepared fruit, 2 crusts	1/6 of 8-inch pie
<i>(Count as 3 carbohydrates + 2 fats)</i>	
Pudding	
regular (made with reduced-fat milk)	1/2 cup
<i>(Count as 2 carbohydrates)</i>	
sugar-free or sugar- and fat-free (made with fat-free milk)	1/2 cup
Sports drink	1 cup (8 oz)
Sugar	1 Tbsp
Syrup	
light (pancake type)	2 Tbsp
regular (pancake type)	1 Tbsp
Yogurt, frozen, fat-free	1/3 cup

Nonstarchy Vegetables

Each serving from this list contains 5 grams carbohydrate, 2 grams protein and 25 calories. You should try to eat at least 2 to 3 nonstarchy vegetable servings each day. Choose a variety of vegetables to benefit from their important vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. When using canned vegetables, choose no salt added versions or rinse regular canned vegetables. In general, a single serving of a nonstarchy vegetable is:

- 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables or vegetable juice
- 1 cup of raw vegetables

Amaranth or Chinese spinach
Beans (green, wax, Italian)
Bean sprouts
Broccoli
Cabbage (green, bok choy, Chinese)
☺ Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Cucumber
Eggplant
Greens (collard, kale, mustard, turnip)
Jicama
Mushrooms, all kinds, fresh
Okra
Onions
Pea pods
☺ Peppers (all varieties)
Radishes
! Sauerkraut
Spinach
Squash (summer, crookneck, zucchini)
Tomatoes, fresh and canned
! Tomato sauce
! Tomato/Vegetable juice
Water chestnuts

Meat and Meat Substitutes

Meat and meat substitutes are rich in protein. Whenever possible, choose lean meats. Portion sizes on this list are based on cooked weight, after bone and fat have been removed. The carbohydrate content varies among plant-based proteins, so read food labels carefully.

Lean meats and meat substitutes: Each serving from this list contains 0 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams protein, 0-3 grams fat and 45 calories.

Beef: Select or Choice grades:	
ground round, roast (chuck, rib, rump), round, sirloin, steak (cubed, flank, porterhouse, T-bone), tenderloin	1 oz
Cheeses with 3 grams of fat or less per oz	1 oz
Cottage cheese	1/4 cup
Egg whites	2
Fish, fresh or frozen, plain: catfish, cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, orange roughy, salmon, tilapia, trout, tuna	
Hot dog with 3 grams of fat or less per oz	1
Pork, lean	
Canadian bacon	1 oz
Rib or loin chip/roast, ham, tenderloin	1 oz
Poultry, without skin	1 oz
Processed sandwich meats with 3 grams of fat or less per oz	
Tuna, canned in water or oil, drained	1 oz

Medium-fat meat and meat substitutes: Each serving from this list contains 0 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams protein, 4-7 grams fat and 75 calories.

Beef: corned beef, ground beef, meatloaf, Prime grades trimmed of fat (prime rib)	
Cheeses with 4-7 grams of fat per oz: feta, mozzarella, pasteurized processed cheese spread, reduced-fat cheeses, string cheese	1 oz
Egg	1
Fish, any fried product	1 oz
Pork, cutlet, shoulder roast	1 oz
Poultry, with skin or fried	1 oz
Ricotta cheese	2 oz or 1/4 cup
! Sausage with 4-7 grams of fat per oz	1 oz

High-fat meat and meat substitutes: Each serving from this list contains 0 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams protein, 8+ grams fat and 100 calories.

Bacon	
! pork	2 slices
! turkey	3 slices
Cheese, regular: American, bleu, brie, cheddar, hard-goat, Monterey jack, queso and swiss	
! Hot dog: beef, pork or combination	1
Pork sparerib	1 oz
Processed sandwich meats with 8 grams of fat or more per oz: bologna, pastrami, hard salami	
	1 oz