

# NUTRITION TIPS FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES



Eating nutritious foods as part of a balanced diet can help to regulate body weight, lessen diabetes symptoms, and lead to a healthier lifestyle. By making a few small changes to your diet, you may experience relief from fatigue, elevated blood sugar, and high blood pressure levels. Always consult your doctor before making large changes to your lifestyle. Here are some general tips for eating well and staying strong:

## SWITCH TO A HEALTHIER DIET

- 1 Take small steps:** Ease into altering your diet. Make changes one at a time to help yourself develop healthy eating habits.
- 2 Keep it balanced:** Select foods from all food groups and avoid trendy diets. Prioritize vegetables and whole grains over fast food and sugary foods.
- 3 Be mindful:** Plan your meals so that you know what you're eating each day. Speak with your doctor about planning meals via the plate (portions) method or carbohydrate counting.
- 4 Hydrate:** Water has zero calories, zero sugars, and does not raise blood sugar levels when consumed. When these levels are high, increasing your water intake permits for more sugar to be flushed out of the blood.
- 5 Be conscious:** Avoid sodas, energy drinks, sweet tea, and fruit punch as they will raise your blood sugar. Try swapping them out for unsweetened teas, fruit- or vegetable-infused water, and low-fat milk.
- 6 Drink in moderation:** Drinking alcohol can cause blood glucose levels to drop. It also can cause damage to your liver, especially when consumed with certain medications. Do not drink alcohol on an empty stomach.

## FOCUS GROUPS

- 1 Prioritize whole grains**—such as brown rice, millet, buckwheat, whole oats, bulgur, quinoa, or whole farro—as your carbohydrate source. Carbohydrates impact blood sugar the fastest, with 100 percent turned to blood sugar after 15 minutes to two hours of eating.
- 2 Choose healthy fats** (monounsaturated) over non-healthy (saturated and trans) fats. Substitute olive or other vegetable oils for butter, margarine, and shortening. Snack on sources of monounsaturated fat such as peanuts, almonds, cashews, or sunflower seeds, or sprinkle them on a salad.
- 3 Eat fiber** to have regular bowel movements, lower cholesterol, improve blood sugar levels, and stay fuller longer. In moderation, starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn, butternut or acorn squash, pumpkin, and parsnips are great sources of fiber.
- 4 Protein isn't just for athletes.** Protein sources, which can include nuts, lean meats, eggs, fish, lowfat or nonfat cottage cheese, and meat substitutes such as tofu, are necessary for the body to build and repair tissue. This food group has a slow impact on blood sugar.
- 5 Eat leafy, green, non-starchy vegetables.** Vegetables are filled with minerals, fiber, and vitamins. Non-starchy varieties, such as broccoli, cucumber, mushrooms, peppers, salad greens, and squash, can leave you feeling fuller longer. A serving of vegetables is 1 cup raw or ½ cup cooked. You should aim for 3 to 5 servings per day.

**Sources:** CDC.gov, diabetes.org, diabetes.org.uk, diabeteseducator.org, health.harvard.edu

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