



# Daily Meal Planning Guide

**Managing Your Diabetes®** patient education program

Good nutrition is one of the most basic and important diabetes care tools. Eating right can help control blood sugar. And good control protects your long-term health. This meal planning guide is a great way to begin making smart food choices.

Whether you are following a calorie-level meal plan, counting carbohydrates, using exchanges or just trying to improve the overall nutritional value of your current eating patterns, the food lists on this sheet will give you a solid starting point.

Think of this plan as only a temporary guide. Keep in mind that every person with diabetes should have a customized meal plan that provides more freedom in terms of food choices. Just about any food, including your favorites, can be fit into your meal plan. A Registered Dietitian (RD) can work with you to develop the plan that best meets your needs and lifestyle. Ask your doctor, diabetes educator, hospital, or local diabetes association for the names of dietitians in your area who specialize in diabetes.

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# Meal Planning Options

Many effective meal plans involve tracking what you eat. Two of the most popular approaches are counting calories for regulating weight and counting carbohydrate for blood sugar control. Your diabetes healthcare professional will recommend the best approach for your needs.

## Calorie Meal Plans

The table below shows sample meal plans, by number of servings, for different calorie levels. To maintain a healthy weight, choose a calorie level close to what you're eating now. If you need to gain or lose weight, ask your doctor, dietitian or educator which plan to use. Each plan provides about half of its calories from carbohydrate and less than 30% of calories from fat, based on choosing skim milk and medium or lower fat meats and cheeses.

## Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrate (starch and sugar) is the main nutrient in food that raises blood sugar. When you plan meals based on carbohydrate counting, count only the foods that contain carbohydrates. Use either the portion sizes shown in the food list, or calculate the carbohydrate (CHO) grams using the bolded numbers in each food list. If you are using a packaged food with a nutrition label, count the number of carbohydrate grams for the serving size. Servings from any of these high carbohydrate groups are considered to be equal: Starch, Fruit, Milk, Other Carbohydrates (Sweets).

## Sample Meal Plans

Calories per day	1,200	1,500	1,800	2,000	2,500	Other:
<b>Carbohydrates</b>						
Starch (15 gram carb servings)	5	7	8	9	11	
Fruit (15 gram carb servings)	3	3	4	4	6	
Milk (12 gram carb servings)	2	2	3	3	3	
Vegetables (5 gram carb servings)*	2	2	3	4	5	
Other carbohydrates						
<b>Meat &amp; Meat Substitutes</b>	4	4	6	6	8	
<b>Fat</b>	3	4	4	5	6	

\* Three vegetable servings provide the same amount of carbohydrates as one serving of other carbohydrate food groups.



## Starches/Breads

(15 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams protein, 1 gram fat, and 80 calories per serving)

These foods are the cornerstone of every healthy eating plan. Most of their calories come from carbohydrates, a good source of energy. Many foods from this group also give you needed fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Prepare and eat starchy foods with as little added fat as possible by limiting butter, margarine, shortening, and oil.

These are just a few of the many available starchy foods. Estimate a single serving size for foods that aren't on the list as follows:

Starchy vegetables, grains, pasta 1/2 cup

Breads and cereals 1 oz

Cooked dried beans of all types 1/3 cup

### Cereals/Beans/Grains/Pasta Serving Size

Beans; cooked or canned (all kinds) 1/3 cup

Cereal; cooked (oatmeal, cream of wheat, rice, etc.) 1/2 cup

Cereal; dry (less than 100 calories per serving) (Serving sizes vary.) (see box)

Pasta; cooked (all kinds) 1/2 cup

Rice; cooked (all kinds) 1/3 cup

### Starchy Vegetables

Corn; cooked or canned 1/2 cup

Corn meal; uncooked (masa or matzo meal) 2 Tbsp

Corn on the cob (6" piece) 1

Malanga; cooked 1/3 cup

Peas (green); cooked or canned 1/2 cup

Plantain (green, mature); cooked 1/3

Potato; baked, boiled, steamed 1 small (3 oz)

Squash (winter, acorn, hubbard) 1 cup

Yam or sweet potato 1/2 cup

### Breads

Bagel 1/2 (1 oz)

Bread (whole wheat, rye, white) 1 oz. slice

Dumplings or gnocchi; steamed 2 small

English muffin 1/2

Pita pocket bread (6"-8" across) 1/2

Roll (dinner, hard) 1 small

Sandwich bun or roll (hamburger, hot-dog, kaiser) 1/2

Tortilla (6" corn or 8" flour) 1

### Crackers/Snacks

Crackers (80 calories/serving) 4-6

Graham crackers (squares) 3

Pretzels (hard) 3/4 oz

Popcorn (plain, popped) 3 cups

### Starches/Breads With Fat

(15 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams protein, 5 or more grams fat, and 125-150 calories per serving)

Count as 1 Starch/Bread AND 1 Fat serving.

Biscuit (2 1/2") 1

Corn, taco, or tortilla chips 1 oz

Potato chips 10

Refried beans 1/3 cup

Rice, fried or Spanish 1/3 cup

Spaghetti sauce or marinara sauce 1/2 cup

## Fruits

(15 grams carbohydrate and 60 calories per serving)

Fruits provide important vitamins and minerals and can be a good source of fiber. To get the most fiber from fruits, eat the edible peelings.

You can estimate the serving size for fruits that aren't on the list as follows:

Fresh, canned, or frozen fruit, no sugar added 1/2 cup

Dried fruit 1/4 cup

### Fresh Fruit Serving Size

Apple; raw (2" across) 1

Applesauce; no sugar added 1/2 cup

Banana (medium) 1/2

Berries (raspberries, boysenberries) 1 cup

Berries (blackberries, blueberries) 3/4 cup

Cantaloupe or honeydew melon 1 cup

Cherries; raw (large) 12

Grapefruit (medium) 1/2

Grapes (small) 15

Mamey (medium) 1/2

Mandarin oranges 3/4 cup

Mango; fresh (small) 1/2

Orange (2 1/2" across) 1

Papaya 1 cup

Peach or pear (2 3/4" across) 1 whole

Pineapple; fresh 3/4 cup

Plums; raw (2" across) 2

Raisins 2 Tbsp

Watermelon 1 1/4 cup

### Fruit Juices

Apple, orange, or grapefruit 1/2 cup

Cranberry, grape, or prune 1/3 cup

## Milk and Milk Products

Milk and milk products supply calcium and other minerals, vitamins, protein, and carbohydrates. Choose low-fat and skimmed varieties for health. They have less fat, calories, and cholesterol than whole milk products.

**Skim Milk and Skim Milk Products** Serv. Size (12 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 1 gram fat, and 90-110 calories per serving)

Buttermilk (low-fat) 8 oz

Hot cocoa from mix (artificially sweetened) 1 envelope

Skim, 1/2%, or 1% milk 8 oz

Yogurt (nonfat, plain or artificially sweetened) 8 oz

### Low-Fat Milk and Low-Fat Milk Products

(12 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 3 or more grams fat, and 120-150 calories per serving)

2% milk 8 oz

Yogurt (low-fat, plain) 8 oz

### Whole Milk and Whole Milk Products

(12 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams protein, 5 or more grams fat, and 150-170 calories per serving)

To reduce your intake of cholesterol and saturated fat, limit or avoid foods in this group.

Whole milk 8 oz

Yogurt, regular, plain 8 oz

## Vegetables

(5 grams carbohydrate, 2 grams protein, and 25 calories per serving)

Vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals and many also provide some fiber. A serving is 1/2 cup of cooked vegetables, 1/2 cup of vegetable juice, or 1 cup of raw vegetables. (Starchy vegetables like potatoes, corn, and peas are listed with Starches/Breads. Vegetables with fewer than 20 calories per serving are listed with Free Foods.)

Bean sprouts

Beans (green, waxed, Italian, snap)

Beets

Broccoli

Cabbage

Cactus leaves (nopales)

Carrots

Eggplant

Greens

Jicama

Mushrooms

Okra

Pea pods or snow peas


Peppers

Sauerkraut

Spinach

Squash (summer, crook neck, zucchini, calabazita)

Tomato

 Tomato or vegetable juice  
Water chestnuts

## Other Carbohydrates

(15 grams carbohydrate, or 1 Starch, or 1 Fruit, or 1 Milk)

Sugars can be included in your meals without losing blood sugar control if they are counted appropriately. Follow Food Guide Pyramid guidelines for keeping the amounts of Sweets and Fats in your overall diet small compared to more nutritionally valuable foods. Portion sizes of foods high in refined sugar are often very small. Read the label.

Cranberry sauce, jellied	1/8 cup
Fruit juice bars, frozen, 100% juice	1 bar (3 oz)
Fruit spreads, 100% fruit	1 Tbsp
Gelatin, regular	1/2 cup
Gingersnaps	3
Ice cream, fat-free, no sugar added	1/2 cup
Jam or jelly, regular	1 Tbsp
Pudding, regular (made with low-fat milk)	1/4 cup
Pudding, sugar-free (made with low-fat milk)	1/2 cup
 Salad dressing, fat-free	1/4 cup
Syrup, regular	1 Tbsp
Yogurt, frozen, fat-free, no sugar added	1/2 cup

## Meat and Meat Substitutes

Small servings of meat and meat substitutes provide enough protein to meet most people's daily needs. For better health, choose very lean and lean meat, fish, poultry, and cheese more often than medium- and high-fat types.

**Very Lean Meats** **Serving Size**  
(7 grams protein, 0-1 grams fat, and 35 calories)

Cheese (1 gram fat or less/oz)	1 oz
Chicken/turkey, white, no skin	1 oz
Fish, fresh, frozen, or canned in water: cod, flounder, tuna	1 oz
Shellfish (clams, crab, shrimp)	1 oz

### Lean Meats

(7 grams protein, 3 grams fat, and 55 calories)

Cheese (1-3 grams fat/oz)	1 oz
Cottage cheese (4.5% fat)	1/4 cup
Lean beef (round, flank, sirloin)	1 oz

Menudo (tripe soup) 1/2 cup



### Medium-Fat Meats

(7 grams protein, 5 grams fat, and 75 calories)

Beef, most cuts when trimmed	1 oz
Cheese (5 grams fat or less/oz)	1 oz
Chicken/turkey (dark meat, skin)	1 oz
Eggs	1
Pork (top loin, chop, cutlets)	1 oz

### High-Fat Meats

(7 grams protein, 8 grams fat, and 100 calories)

 Cheese, all regular (American, Swiss, etc.)	1 oz
Chitterlings	1 oz
Pork (spareribs, barbecue)	1 oz
 Sausage, wieners, chorizo, kielbasa, or Spam®	1 oz

## Fats

(5 grams fat and 45 calories per serving)

Fats add flavor and moisture to food but have few vitamins and minerals. Serving sizes of all fats are small. Choose mono- and polyunsaturated fats more often than saturated fats for better heart health and to lower blood cholesterol levels.

**Monounsaturated Fats** **Serving Size**

Avocado, 4" across	1/8
Oil (canola, olive, peanut)	1 tsp
Peanut butter	2 tsp
Pesto sauce	2 tsp

### Polyunsaturated Fats

Margarine: stick, tub, or squeeze	1 tsp
Mayonnaise, reduced fat	1 Tbsp
Mayonnaise, regular	1 tsp
Oil (corn, safflower, soybean)	1 tsp


### Saturated Fats

Bacon	1 slice
Butter	1 tsp
Chicken or beef fat, lard	1 tsp
Cream (light, coffee, sour)	1 Tbsp

## Free Foods

Each free food or drink contains fewer than 20 calories per serving. Eat as much as you want of the free foods that list no serving size. Eat up to 3 servings per day of free foods that have serving sizes listed. For better blood sugar control, spread your servings of these extra foods throughout the day.

## Drinks

 Bouillon or broth, fat free  
Coffee or tea  
Soft drinks, calorie-free


### Sweet Substitutes

Gelatin, sugar-free	
Jam or jelly, sugar-free	2 tsp
Whipped topping	2 Tbsp


### Fruits

Cranberries or rhubarb, no sugar added	1/2 cup
Spreadable fruit, no sugar added	1 tsp

### Condiments


Catsup (1 Tbsp)	
Hot sauce	
Mustard	
 Salad dressing, low-calorie (all types)	2 Tbsp
Salsa (all kinds)	
Taco sauce (2 Tbsp)	
Vinegar	

### Vegetables


Celery	
Cilantro	
Cucumber	
 Dill pickles, unsweetened	
Horseradish	
Onions	
Peppers (hot, chile)	
Radishes	
Salad greens (all types)	


## Seasonings

Seasonings can be used as desired. If you are on a low-sodium diet, read labels to avoid seasonings that contain sodium or salt.

Flavoring extracts (vanilla, etc.)	
Garlic or garlic powder	
Herbs, fresh or dried	
Lemon or lemon juice	
Onion powder	
Paprika	
Pepper	
 Soy sauce	
Worcestershire sauce	

## Key

 = good source of fiber

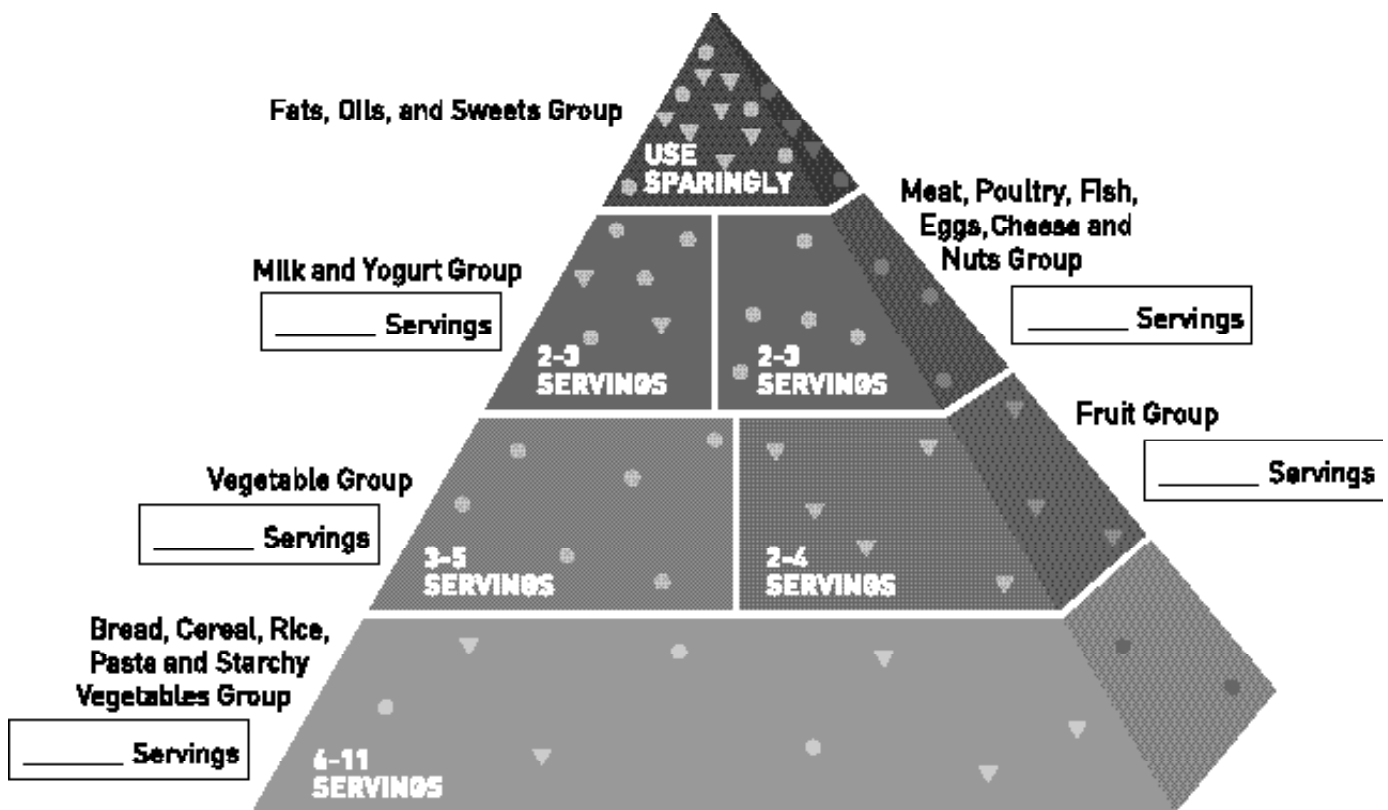
 = high in salt

oz = ounce

tsp = teaspoon

Tbsp = Tablespoon

# The Food Guide Pyramid



These symbols show fat and added sugars in foods

- Fat (naturally occurring and added)
- ▼ Sugars (added)

## The Food Guide Pyramid

The pyramid is a good basic guide to choosing healthy foods. The foods in each section provide some, but not all, of the nutrients needed for health. It is important to eat servings from each group every day. Most people need more of the foods shown in the larger sections at the bottom, and fewer servings from the smaller sections. If you're using the pyramid, your health care provider will write in the number of servings recommended for your particular needs.

Try your hand at these guidelines for estimating portion sizes:



**fist = 1 cup**  
(Example: two servings of pasta or oatmeal)



**palm = 3 oz**  
(Example: a cooked serving of meat)



**thumb tip = 1 teaspoon**  
(Example: a serving of mayonnaise or margarine)



**handful = 1 or 2 oz snackfood**  
(Example: 1 oz nuts = 1 handful; 2 oz pretzels = 2 handfuls)



**thumb = 1 oz**  
(Example: a piece of cheese)

# Personal Meal Plan

Goal: Distribute the total number of carbohydrate choices throughout the day in meals and snacks.

**Total Calories:**

**Carbohydrate – # of choices:**

**grams:**

**Protein (grams):**

**Fat (grams):**

**Breakfast**

**Time:**

# CHO choices:

Grams CHO:

**Lunch**

**Time:**

# CHO choices:

Grams CHO:

**Dinner**

**Time:**

# CHO choices:

Grams CHO:

**Daytime or Evening Snack (If part of daily plan)**

**Time:**

# CHO choices:

Grams CHO:

**Dietitian Name:**

**Dietitian Phone: (     )**

**Date:**

**Key:** CHO = Carbohydrate

