



Registered Dietitians
Department of
Veterans Affairs
Leading the way to better health

Diabetes Guidelines

Eating healthy is the first step in controlling diabetes. Here's how to get started:

Eat 3 meals a day. Eat your meals at the same time each day and do not skip meals. Eat about the same amount of food each day.



Limit sugar and sweets. Eat less candy, desserts, pastries and jelly. Limit intake of fruit juice and drink sugar free beverages such as diet soda, water, Crystal Light, and unsweetened tea instead. Use Equal or Sweet-n-Low in place of sugar.

Lose weight if you are overweight. Most adults who have diabetes are overweight. Even a small amount of weight loss may help improve your blood sugar control. To help lose weight, reduce your portion sizes.

Control your intake of carbohydrates. Carbohydrate is the main nutrient that affects blood sugar levels. All the carbohydrate you eat is turned into sugar by your body. Therefore, it is important to control the amount of carbohydrate that you eat a day. You should eat about 60-75 grams of carbohydrate at each meal.

Common sources of carbohydrates:

- ◆ Fruit and fruit juice
- ◆ Bread, cereal, pasta, rice
- ◆ Starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, peas)
- ◆ Milk, yogurt, pudding
- ◆ Beans and lentils
- ◆ Desserts, candy, ice cream, doughnuts and pastries





Be more active. Regular exercise is an important part of your diabetes care as exercise can help lower your blood sugar levels. The type and amount of exercise that is right for you should be discussed with your doctor.

Reduce your intake of high fat foods. Cutting back on your intake of high fat food can help reduce body weight and cholesterol levels. Reduce intake of fried food, bacon, sausage, luncheon meat, gravy, sour cream, cheese, egg yolks and margarine/butter.

Increase your intake of non-starchy vegetables.

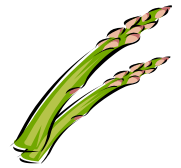
Vegetables are low in carbohydrates and high in fiber. Add vegetables to meals for variety and to help fill you up.

Examples include:

Asparagus
Beets
Broccoli
Brussels
sprouts
Cabbage

Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Cucumbers
Green beans
Lettuce

Onions
Spinach
Tomato juice
Tomatoes
Yellow Squash
Zucchini



Eat more fiber. Fiber can help slow down the rise in blood sugar following a meal. To get more fiber in your diet, eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, choose whole grain bread/cereal and eat more beans or legumes.

Limit your intake of alcohol. Drink alcohol only with permission of your doctor. Never drink alcohol on an empty stomach.

Know your blood sugar levels. You should check your blood sugar levels on a regular basis. Blood sugar goals:

Before a meal:	90-130
2 hours after a meal:	less than 180
Bedtime:	110-150



Contact your local VA Dietitian for more information.