

TIPS FOR MANAGING DIABETES

Diabetes is a disease that happens when there is too much sugar in your blood.

When you eat food, your body turns the food into **sugar** (carbohydrates), which is your body's main source of energy. The sugar goes into your bloodstream, and then a hormone called insulin helps guide the sugar from your blood into your body's cells, where it can be used as energy.

Diabetes occurs when your body doesn't make enough insulin, or the insulin generated can't be used as well by your body. Over a long period of time, when there is too much sugar in your blood it can lead to heart disease, kidney disease and vision loss.

Carbs: Foods That Turn Into Sugar In Your Body

Carbohydrates are foods that provide energy for the body. All people need carbohydrates, but not all carbohydrates are the same. Some cause blood sugar to go up very fast, while others slowly increase blood sugar over time. There are two types of carbohydrates to keep in mind for diabetes management: **simple** and **whole carbohydrates**.

✘ Simple carbs: eat less often

- Provide quick energy for a short period of time.
- Examples: soda, juice, white pasta, white bread, desserts, french fries, candy, ice cream and baked goods.
- Absorbed quickly into blood causing a spike.
- Contain little to no vitamins & minerals.

✘ Whole food carbs: eat more often

- Provide long-term energy.
- Examples: fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains.
- Contain fiber, which helps sugar enter the blood more slowly.
- Contains many vitamins & minerals.

Fruit

Fruit is an excellent source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Some fruits can cause your blood sugar to go up more than others. Knowing which fruit cause sugar spikes is important for managing your blood sugar while allowing you to enjoy delicious foods. Below are recommendations for fruits that can be eat often, sometimes and rarely.

✘ Fruits to eat often

Apricots, avocados, blueberries, blackberries, coconut (unsweetened), raspberries, strawberries.

✘ Fruits to eat sometimes

Apples, bananas, cherries, figs, kiwi, oranges, papaya, pomegranates.

✘ Fruits to eat rarely

Dried fruit, grapes, mangoes, over ripened fruit, pineapple, watermelon.

5 ways to keep blood sugar on target

✘ #1 Check blood sugar with a glucometer

Check your blood sugar two hours after your largest meal of the day. People with diabetes should typically have a blood sugar below 180 two hours after a large meal. If you are much higher than 180, consider smaller portions or decrease the amount of carbs you are eating or drinking at meals. If you take insulin, you should check blood sugar more frequently. Blood sugar goals may vary.

✘ #2 Make a carb combo—pair carbs with protein or fat

When you eat **fat** and/or **protein** at the same time as a carbohydrate, it slows down how fast the carbohydrates are digested and enter the blood. Avoid eating carbohydrates by themselves and instead, pair with proteins & fats (meat, fish, dairy, nuts, heart healthy fats).

EXAMPLES OF A CARB COMBO

- Rice (Carb) + Chicken (Protein) + Avocado (Fat)
- Whole Wheat Pasta (Carb) + Ground Pork Pasta Sauce (Protein)
- Apple (Carb) + Peanut Butter (Protein/Fat)
- Crackers (Carb) + Cheese (Protein/Fat)

✘ #3 Choose Zero Sugar Drinks

Sugary drinks like soda, juice, coffee with added sugar and even fruit smoothies, can cause your blood sugar to go up very fast. Your body absorbs liquids very quickly, causing blood sugar to spike. Choosing zero sugar drinks like water, flavored seltzer water, and zero sugar teas (hot or iced) can make a BIG difference in improving your blood sugar. You can also make smoothies with low sugar fruits (see table) and drink it with a protein or fat snack to make a **Carb Combo**.

✘ #4 Balance your plate

A good rule is to make $\frac{1}{2}$ your plate veggies, $\frac{1}{4}$ your plate carbs and a $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate protein. A great way to keep your blood sugar on target is to build a plate that is at least half made up of non-starchy vegetables such as leafy greens, bell peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, cauliflower, asparagus and broccoli. Your serving of carbohydrates (rice, potatoes, pasta) should make up $\frac{1}{4}$ of the plate or be about the size of your fist. The last $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate should include fats (oils/butter) and protein (meat, poultry, eggs, tofu).

✘ #5 Find ways to be active

Exercise helps to improve our blood sugar and also helps improve our mood, strength, sleep quality and manage weight. However, it is up to you how you want to move your body. Exercise can be a social event like dancing, walking with a friend, or playing soccer with friends. It's important to **choose an activity you enjoy** and can stick with. Every movement counts and consistency is key!