

Healthy Meal Planning for People with Diabetes (1 of 2)

A guide to healthy meal planning

Your food and drink choices directly affect your blood glucose (sugar) levels, can increase your blood pressure and can affect the amount of cholesterol and triglycerides (fats) in the blood. Therefore it is important to make food choices that build healthy meals.



Healthy meal planning does not mean that you have to deprive yourself of all the foods and drinks you enjoy. Instead it is about getting the right balance of foods on your plate. Use the Balance of Good Health food guide to help plan healthy meals:

- eat regularly – aim to have 3 meals a day based on starchy foods such as bread, breakfast cereals, pasta, rice and potatoes.
- have larger portions of high fibre foods such as wholegrain cereals, granary and multigrain breads, fruits, vegetables and pulses (e.g. peas, beans and lentils) and smaller amounts of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts and cheese on your plate.
- aim for at least 5 servings every day of fruits, vegetables and salads (1 serving is 1 medium piece of fruit or 1 cupful of small fruits or 1 small glass of unsweetened fruit juice* or 2-3 tablespoons of vegetables or 1 dessert bowlful of salad vegetables).
- eat less fat, fried and fatty foods, especially those that contain saturated fats – choose more low fat foods (foods that contain less than 3g fat per 100g serving) and use spreading fats, cooking oils and other fats sparingly.
- try to use less salt in cooking – use herbs, spices, pepper, garlic, mustard, vinegar and lemon juice to flavour your meals instead.
- eat less sugar and sweet foods – use an artificial sweetener to sweeten fruit, milk puddings and custard and choose jellies and desserts that are low in sugar (contain less than 10g sugar per 100g serving).

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- if you drink alcohol, then drink in moderation along with meals – limit your alcohol intake to no more than 1-2 units a day if you are a woman and no more than 2-3 units a day if you are a man (1 unit is ½ pint of beer, lager or cider or 1 small glass of wine or 1 pub measure of spirits).

* Limit fruit juice to no more than 1-2 small glasses per day with meals.

Ideas for balanced healthy meals

Breakfast

- Granary or multigrain toast, scrape of margarine and reduced sugar jam or marmalade.
- Porridge, unsweetened muesli, Bran Flakes or other wholegrain breakfast cereal with semi skimmed milk.
- Bagel with low fat soft cheese.
- Scrambled egg, tinned tomatoes, grilled mushrooms or baked beans on granary / multigrain toast.

Snack meals

- Granary / multigrain bread sandwiches or rolls with filling (e.g. chicken and salad, ham and tomato, tuna and cucumber, reduced fat cheese and celery).
- Toast with baked beans, scrambled egg, sardines or reduced fat cheese with a small side salad.
- Filled baked potato with baked beans, tuna and sweetcorn, cottage cheese or chilli con carne.
- Lentil or vegetable based soup with granary roll.

Main meals

- Chicken casserole, basmati rice and green beans
- Grilled salmon with new potatoes and peas.
- Spaghetti bolognese served with side salad.
- Vegetable and bean chilli / chilli con carne with basmati rice and side salad.
- Lean pork, chicken or turkey with boiled noodles and lightly stir fried vegetables.

Desserts (optional)

- Fresh fruit, tinned fruit in natural juice or stewed fruit without sugar.
- Sugar free jelly, diet / very low fat yoghurts or fromage frais, low sugar desserts, low sugar milk puddings and custard.

Getting help with meal planning

Healthy meal planning can sometimes seem too complicated, so talk to your Practice Nurse or Dietitian, who will be able to help you to put together a meal plan that is right for you. Diabetes UK (<http://www.diabetes.org.uk/>) also has a selection of diet and cookery books and leaflets that are available to purchase, which give lots of ideas for healthy meal planning – ask your Practice Nurse or Dietitian for a list of these. Further leaflets on particular food items (for example on fats) are available. Please ask if you want one.

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