



Healthy Eating for People with Diabetes

You're Guide to Healthy Meal Planning

If you are living with diabetes, enjoying balanced and nutritious meals are crucial to your continued good health. Your diet not only plays a major role in managing your diabetes; but also determines how well you feel and how much energy you have each day.

When you consume excess calories and fatty foods, your body responds with a surge in blood sugar. If this is not managed, it can lead to high blood sugar (hyperglycemia), heart disease and long-term complications, such as nerve, and kidney damage.¹

Although there is no 'one-size-fits-all' plan, here are a few basic rules of thumb that can help you create a successful blue print for your healthy meal times.²

Portion Size

Good nutrition is an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. For pre diabetics and those living with type 2 diabetes, the importance of a varied and balanced diet cannot be overlooked. Foods containing carbohydrates, particularly from whole grains, fruits, vegetables, protein, and fat are essential in forging a balanced meal plan.

The 'plate method'³ is a great place to start, regardless of whether you're cooking at home or eating out with friends and family.

Image not readable or empty
/sites/nscom/files/dear-nestle-article03-images_diabetik_01_0.jpg

How does it work?

Step 1: Imagine a line drawn down the centre of the plate. On one side draw a horizontal line in the middle splitting the half in two³.

Step 2: Fill half of the plate with vegetables such as spinach, carrots, lettuce, baby corn and broccoli; and fruits such as apples, grapes and bananas³

Step 3: Fill one quarter of your plate with whole grains and starchy carbohydrates like bread, pasta and rice.

Step 4: Fill the last quarter of your plate with a protein such as fish, poultry, meat, egg and legumes.

Step 5: Complete the meal with a glass of unsweetened beverage. Eg. Water or milk.

Protein and Fibre

Food containing fibre and protein help you feel full faster, and has a minimal effect on your blood sugar level^{9,10}. Protein helps to break down your food slowly, thus supporting a balanced blood sugar level⁸.

Whey protein, is widely known to for its high protein content which effectively reduces blood sugar spikes after meals compared to other protein sources such as eggs, soy or tuna¹⁵. Whey protein essentially helps release specific types of hormones in your body, GLP-1 and GIP, to stimulate insulin after a meal. Taken over a period of time, whey protein even helps to reduce your HbA1c.

Meanwhile, fibre is beneficial to diabetics because of its role in decreasing blood glucose and lipid levels.^{11,12} Also known as roughage or bulk, dietary fibre can slow down the absorption of sugar by increasing the thickness of the intestinal contents after a meal. Additionally, soluble fibers produces short-chain fatty acids that help to prevent your liver from secreting too much glucose into your blood during overnight fasting.

Most complex carbohydrate foods contain fiber, and generally take longer to digest. Due to its slow-releasing nature, complex carbohydrate, have less of an immediate impact on blood sugar, thus help improve glycaemic response and regulate blood sugar level.



Glycemic Index

The Glycemic Index or GI, measures the speed of which a carbohydrate-containing food raises the blood sugar in our body. The faster the conversion, the higher the GI number. Foods with a high glycemic index can cause spikes in blood glucose levels, while foods with a low glycemic index results in a more gradual rise in blood glucose levels⁴.

As a general rule of thumb, look for foods that have a low to medium GI. Eating foods with a low GI not only confers the added benefit of keeping blood sugar level balanced, and prevent against heart disease and type 2 diabetes, but it can also aid with weight management by curbing your appetite⁶.

Carbohydrate Counting

Carbohydrates provide an essential source of energy, which in turn fuels the body. However, carbohydrates can cause a rise in blood sugar levels.

Carbohydrate counting⁷ is a meal planning method to manage your blood sugar level. It keeps track of how much carbohydrates you eat by effectively measuring the grams of carbohydrates consumed, and its subsequent effect on your blood sugar.

Generally, aim to have about 45 to 60 grams of carbohydrate for each main meal⁷. However, some individuals may need more or less, depending on their lifestyle. Coupled with exercise and diabetes medication (if needed), this method can effectively help you to keep your blood sugar levels within range⁷.

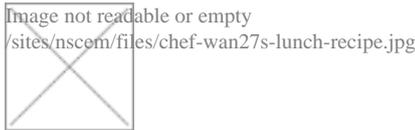
If you're worried that you may not be receiving enough nutrition from your current meal plan, consider supplementing it with a specialised diabetes nutritional beverage. Specialised diabetes nutritional beverage are a great source of nourishment, as they provide the right balance of carbohydrates, fats and proteins while offering a slow-release of energy to balance blood sugar. They can even be enjoyed as a meal replacement.

A good specialized diabetes nutritional beverage that can play a role, and support you in managing your blood sugar level should contain whey protein, 100% soluble fibre, and slow digesting complex carbohydrate. It should also be low in GI, and meets the latest recommendations by the American Diabetes Association.

Meal planning is an integral part of diabetes management. It serves as a guide to ensure that you have all the nutrition you need to lead a healthy life while balancing blood sugar level. So, get the ball rolling and bring the benefits of meal planning to your family table.

This article is brought to you by NUTREN UNTUK DIABETIK[®], a sucrose, lactose and fructose free, clinically proven complete and balanced nutritious beverage for people with diabetes. Formulated in accordance to the International Diabetes Guidelines, NUTREN UNTUK DIABETIK[®] meets the latest American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommendations. NUTREN UNTUK DIABETIK[®] has a low GI and contains whey protein and a unique fibre blend to help you stay in control and energised for the day. NUTREN UNTUK DIABETIK[®], Together We Take Charge.

[Try it today with our Chef's recipe.](#)



References:

1. Complications of diabetes. 2015 International Diabetes Federation. Retrieved Nov 1, 2016, from <http://www.idf.org/complications-diabetes>
 2. Diabetes diet: Create your healthy-eating plan (2016, September 9). In *Mayo Clinic*. Retrieved October 28, 2016, from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/in-depth/diabetes-diet/art-2004429>
 3. Pinggan Sihat Malaysia: Suku Suku Separuh. Bahagian Pemakanan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia. Retrieved Nov 8, 2016 from <https://www.facebook.com/bahagianpemakanankkm/photos>
 4. Carbohydrates & Blood Sugar. The Nutrition Source – Harvard TH Chan. Retrieved on 28 Oct 2016 from <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/carbohydrates/carbohydrates-and-blood-sugar/>
 5. Glycemic Index and Diabetes: What Affects the GI of a Food? (May 14, 2014). In American Diabetes Organisation. Retrieved Nov 1, 2016 from <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/what-can-i-eat/understanding-carbohydrates/glycemic-index-and-diabetes.html>
 6. Lewin, Jo. Spotlight on ...low GI. Retrieved Nov 8, 2016 from <http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/spotlight-low-gi>
 7. Carbohydrate Counting (n.d.). In American Diabetes Association. Retrieved October 28, 2016, from <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/what-can-i-eat/understanding-carbohydrates/carbohydrate-counting.html>
 8. Carbohydrate Counting and Diabetes (n.d.). In *National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases*. Retrieved October 7, 2016, from <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/diabetes-diet-eating/carbohydrate-counting>
 9. <http://www.diabetes.org/mfa-recipes/tips/2013-05/less-sodium-just-as-much-2013-5.html>
-

