HEALTHY EATING

If you've just learned that you have diabetes or prediabetes, you probably have a lot of questions about what you can or can't eat. Do you wonder if you can ever have your favorite food again? What happens when you are eating at a restaurant or a friend's house? Do you have to change your whole diet just because you have diabetes?

The answer is **NO**. There is nothing that you can't eat. You don't have to give up your favorite foods or stop eating at restaurants.

But, it is important to know that everything you eat has an effect on your blood glucose (sugar). Learning to manage portion size and making healthy food choices can help you live better with diabetes and prevent other health problems.

Some skills are more complex, but your diabetes educator or dietitian can help you learn about:

- » Counting carbohydrates
- » Reading food labels
- » Measuring the amount of a serving
- » Developing a practical meal plan
- » Preventing high or low blood glucose
- » Setting goals for healthy eating

Pick one or two of these skills and discuss them with your healthcare provider.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are only 3 main types of nutrients in food: carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. A healthy meal will include all three types.

TRUE OR FALSE:

People with diabetes can't have sugar.

FALSE: Sugar is just another carbohydrate and can fit into a meal plan. Sugary foods, however, do not have the same nutrition as grains or vegetables, and can often be high in fat and calories. It's best to limit sugar-containing foods to small portions, and be sure to count the carbohydrates toward the total recommended in your meal plan.

Word Wall

CARBOHYDRATE (AKA "CARBS"):
One of the three main types of nutrients found in food. Bread, pasta, rice, fruits, vegetables (especially starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn, peas, dried beans), milk, and sweets are all carbs. Don't forget that carbohydrates can be found in beverages, too.

PORTION:
How much of a food you eat

MEAL PLAN:
A guide for healthy eating developed with your healthcare provider

HYPOGLYCEMIA:
Low blood glucose

HYPERGLYCEMIA:
High blood glucose

QUICK TIPS

Eat breakfast every day. Breakfast helps begin the calorie-burning process that provides you with energy. Include small snacks between meals as part of your daily intake to help keep your body going.

Space your meals throughout the day. Going too long without eating may result in excessive hunger, which can lead to overeating later on. Try to eat every 4 to 5 hours during waking hours.

ASK YOURSELF

When I think about healthy eating, I feel: _____ , _____ and
_____ . *(Pick 3 words to fill in the blanks)*

What did you eat for dinner last night?_____

Is there anything you could have done to make your meal healthier? _____

For you, what is the hardest part about healthy eating?_____

What is the best part about healthy eating?_____

REMEMBER THAT A HEALTHY MEAL PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE:

» **Complex carbohydrates** such as whole grain bread

» **Fiber,** which is found in beans, whole grains, fruits and vegetables

» **Lean protein,** such as chicken (without skin) or fish

» **Lots of vegetables**—especially the green, leafy ones

» **A limited amount of heart-healthy fats,** such as olive, peanut or canola oil, walnuts, almonds and flax seed

A good first step is to follow the "plate method" of meal planning,
which includes a healthy balance of foods and controlled portions.

Visually divide your plate into 4 sections. For lunch or dinner, fill ½ the plate with non-starchy vegetables (such as: greens, green beans, broccoli, cabbage); ¼ should contain meat or other protein (fish, eggs, low-fat cheeses, cottage cheese); ¼ contains starch (such as a potato, whole grain bread, beans or legumes). On the side, include an 8 ounce glass of low fat milk or a small piece of fruit.

PLAN A HEALTHY DINNER THAT YOU WILL ENJOY IN THE SPACE BELOW.

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