

# Just *the* Basics

**Diabetes** is a condition in which your body cannot properly use and store food for energy. The fuel that your body needs is called glucose, a form of sugar. Glucose comes from foods such as fruit, milk, some vegetables, starchy foods and sugar.

To control your blood glucose you will need to eat healthy foods, be active and you may need to take pills and/or insulin.

## TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING, DIABETES PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

Here are some tips to help you until you see a registered dietitian.

### TIPS

### REASONS

Eat three meals per day at regular times and space meals no more than six hours apart. You may benefit from a healthy snack.

Eating at regular times helps your body control blood glucose levels.

Limit sugars and sweets such as sugar, regular pop, desserts, candies, jam and honey.

The more sugar you eat, the higher your blood glucose will be. Artificial sweeteners can be useful.

Limit the amount of high fat food you eat such as fried foods, chips and pastries.

High fat foods may cause you to gain weight. A healthy weight helps with blood glucose control and is healthier for your heart.

Eat more high fibre foods (whole grain breads and cereals, lentils, dried beans and peas, brown rice, vegetables and fruits).

Foods high in fibre may help you feel full and may lower blood glucose and cholesterol levels.

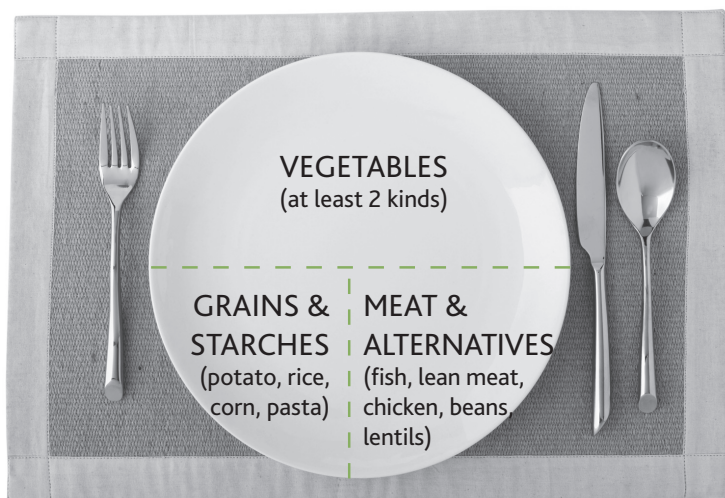
If you are thirsty, drink water.

Drinking regular pop and fruit juice will raise your blood glucose.

Add physical activity to your life.

Regular physical activity will improve your blood glucose control.

# Plan *for* healthy eating



- Have a glass of milk and a piece of fruit to complete your meal.
- Alcohol can affect blood glucose levels and cause you to gain weight. Talk to your healthcare professional about whether you can include alcohol in your meal plan and how much is safe.

- Eat more vegetables. These are very high in nutrients and low in calories.
- Choose starchy foods such as whole grain breads and cereals, rice, noodles, or potatoes at every meal. Starchy foods are broken down into glucose, which your body needs for energy.
- Include fish, lean meats, low-fat cheeses, eggs, or vegetarian protein choices as part of your meal.

**It's natural to have questions about what food to eat. A registered dietitian can help you include your favourite foods in a personalized meal plan.**

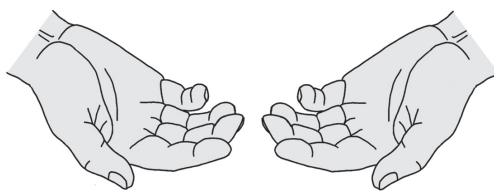
## Handy portion guide

Your hands can be very useful in estimating appropriate portions. When planning a meal, use the following portion sizes as a guide:



### **FRUITS\*/GRAINS & STARCHES\*:**

Choose an amount the size of your fist for each of Grains & Starches, and Fruit.



### **VEGETABLES\*:**

Choose as much as you can hold in both hands.



### **MEAT & ALTERNATIVES\*:**

Choose an amount up to the size of the palm of your hand and the thickness of your little finger.



### **FATS\*:**

Limit fat to an amount the size of the tip of your thumb.

**MILK & ALTERNATIVES\*:** Drink up to 250 mL (8 oz) of low-fat milk with a meal.

\* Food group names taken from *Beyond the Basics: Meal Planning for Healthy Eating, Diabetes Prevention and Management* © Canadian Diabetes Association, 2005. Please refer to this resource for more details on meal planning.

# Increase *your* physical activity

- Build time for physical activity into your daily routine.
- Try to be active most days of the week.
- Walk whenever you can, instead of taking the car.
- Start slowly and gradually increase the amount of effort; for instance progress from strolling to brisk walking.
- Make family activities active; try swimming or skating instead of watching TV or a movie.
- Try new activities; learn to dance, play basketball, or ride a bike.
- Enjoy your improved sense of health and wellbeing.

- The Canadian Diabetes Association recommends that all people with diabetes should receive advice on nutrition from a registered dietitian.
- Good management of diabetes includes healthy eating, staying active and taking required medication.
- Be sure to eat breakfast. It provides a good start to the day.

## Sample meal plan

### FOR SMALLER APPETITES

#### Breakfast:

Cold cereal ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, 125 mL)

Whole-grain toast (1 slice)

1 orange

Low-fat milk (1 cup, 250 mL)

Peanut butter (2 tbsp, 30 mL)

Tea or coffee



#### Lunch:

1 sandwich

- 2 slices of whole grain bread or 6" pita

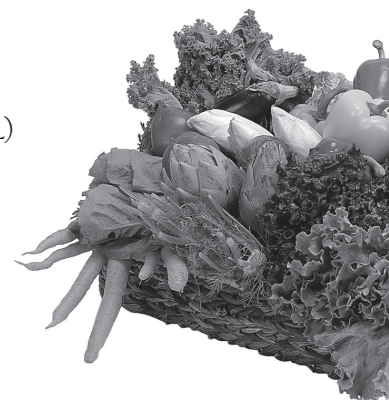
- meat, chicken or fish (2 oz, 60 g)

- non-hydrogenated margarine (1 tsp, 5 mL)

Carrot sticks

Low-fat plain yogurt ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup, 175 mL)

Tea or coffee



#### Dinner:

Potato (1 medium) or rice ( $\frac{2}{3}$  cup, 150 mL)

Vegetables

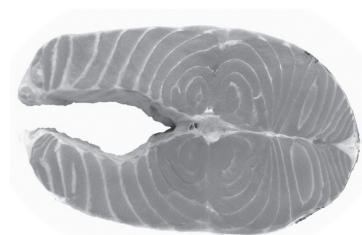
Non-hydrogenated margarine (1 tsp, 5 mL)

Lean meat, chicken, or fish (2 oz, 60 g)

Cantaloupe (1 cup, 250 mL)

Low-fat milk (1 cup, 250 mL)

Tea or coffee



#### Evening Snack:

Low-fat cheese (1 oz, 30 g)

Whole-grain crackers (4)





# Follow a healthy lifestyle

- Have at least 3 out of the 4 key food groups at each meal from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*:
  - Vegetables and Fruit
  - Grain Products
  - Milk and Alternatives
  - Meat and Alternatives
- Have portion sizes that will help you reach or maintain a healthy body weight.
- Include high fibre foods such as whole grain breads and cereals, fresh fruits, vegetables and legumes, and grains (e.g. pasta, rice).
- Make lower fat choices (e.g. use skim milk, lean ground beef, trim fat on meat, chicken etc., and use small amounts of added fat such as oil and salad dressings);
- Healthy eating habits should be built around a healthy lifestyle – keep active every day.



## Sample meal plan

### FOR BIGGER APPETITES

#### Breakfast:

Cold cereal (½ cup, 125 mL)  
Whole-grain toast (2 slices)  
1 orange  
Low-fat milk (1 cup, 250 mL)  
Low-fat cheese (2 oz, 60 g)  
Tea or coffee

#### Lunch:

Soup (1 cup, 250 mL)  
Sandwich

- 2 slices whole grain bread or 6" pita
- lean meat, chicken or fish (3 oz, 90 g)
- tomato slices
- non-hydrogenated margarine (1 tsp, 5 mL)

Carrot sticks  
Low-fat plain yogurt (¾ cup, 175 mL)  
Tea or coffee

#### Afternoon Snack:

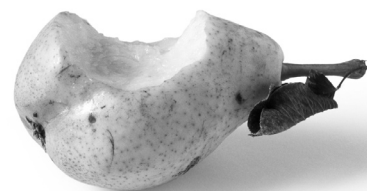
1 medium apple or small banana

#### Dinner:

1 large potato or cooked noodles (1 ½ cup, 375 mL)  
Vegetables  
Green salad with low-fat salad dressing  
Lean meat, chicken or fish (4 oz, 120 g)  
1 medium pear  
Low-fat milk (1 cup, 250 mL)  
Tea or coffee

#### Evening Snack:

Peanut butter (4 tbsp, 60 mL)  
Whole-grain crackers (4)  
Low-fat milk (1 cup, 250 mL)



*The Canadian Diabetes Association works in communities across the country to promote the health of Canadians and eliminate diabetes through our strong nationwide network of volunteers, employees, healthcare professionals, researchers, partners and supporters. In the struggle against this global epidemic, our expertise is recognized around the world. The Canadian Diabetes Association: setting the world standard.*