

Healthy Eating for Diabetes

Your Questions Answered!

Wellview's Certified Diabetes Educators address your most common concerns about eating with diabetes.



Meal Planning for Diabetes Control

Q. What is a good food group to plan meals around?

A. Non-starchy vegetables are vegetables with a low carbohydrate content, about 5-8 grams per cup. They are rich in fiber and contain many nutrients which keep our body in great shape. Examples are peppers, onions, carrots, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, green beans, radishes, celery, spinach, kale, and many more. The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends that non-starchy vegetables should make up half of your plate's content at main meals.

Q. What about starchy vegetables and legumes?

A. Starchy vegetables and legumes contain about 30 grams of carbohydrate per cup. One cup of starchy vegetable like winter squash, sweet potato, pumpkin, and parsnips has about 8 grams of fiber. One cup of legumes like navy beans, pinto beans, black beans, fava beans, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, lima beans, black-eyed peas and green peas contain 14 grams of fiber. Fiber can slow the absorption of sugar and help improve blood sugar levels.

Q. What about added sugars in foods?

A. The American Heart Association recommends no more than 9 teaspoons per day for men and 6 tsp per day for women. Foods with added sugar do not have the same nutrient content, are often processed foods and can be high in fat and calories. If you choose a food with added sugars, be sure and count the total carbohydrates per serving which would include the added sugars.

Q. What are the 7 essential nutrients needed for a balance diet?

A. High fiber; complex carbohydrates like beans, peas and whole grains; lean proteins like fish and chicken; healthy fats like olive oil and avocado; minerals and vitamins found in non-starchy vegetables; and water.

Q. Are artificial sweeteners safe?

A. The FDA has approved five artificial sweeteners: saccharin, acesulfame, aspartame, neotame, and sucralose. It has approved one natural low-calorie sweetener: stevia. Non-nutritive sweeteners could help reduce added sugars in the diet lowering the calories you eat. How the human body and brain respond to these sweeteners is very complex. Studies have ruled out cancer risk but it's possible these products change the way food tastes. People who routinely use artificial sweeteners may find less intensely sweet foods, such as fruit, less appealing and non-sweet foods, such as vegetables, unpalatable. So, the best choice over diet drinks and sugar free candy is an apple and a glass of water!

Useful Resources

Meal Planning Website:
PlanToEat.com

Recipes:
DiabeticLivingOnline.com
Diabetes.org/mfa-recipes/
CookingLight.com/eating-smart/
nutrition-101/diabetic-recipes

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