

Diabetic Diet Guide

A general reference for managing blood sugar through diet in type 2 diabetes and prediabetes. Portion examples are general guidance, not a prescription - consult your physician or a registered dietitian for advice specific to you, especially if you take insulin or other glucose-lowering medication.

Bread, Cereals & Grains	
What to Avoid	Preferred
White bread, white rice, sugary cereals, and refined pastries, which raise blood sugar quickly	Whole grain bread, brown rice, quinoa, and steel-cut oats; keep carbohydrate portions to about 1/4 of your plate or a cupped handful (3-4 oz) per meal
Meat & Poultry	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Fried meats, breaded cutlets, and processed or cured meats high in sodium and saturated fat	Skinless chicken or turkey breast and lean cuts of beef or pork, about 2-3 oz per meal (roughly the size of a deck of cards), baked or grilled
Seafood	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Fried or breaded fish and shellfish	Fatty fish rich in omega-3s - salmon, mackerel, sardines - baked or grilled, 2-3 servings a week; supports heart health, a common concern alongside diabetes
Dairy & Eggs	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Sweetened yogurts, flavored milk, and full-fat ice cream	Unsweetened low-fat milk, plain Greek yogurt, and low-fat cheese, 2-3 servings daily; eggs in moderation
Fruits	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Fruit juice, canned fruit in syrup, and dried fruit in large amounts - concentrated sugar with little fiber	Whole fresh fruit with the skin on - berries, apples, pears, citrus - about 1 small piece or 3/4 cup per serving, 2-3 servings daily, paired with a protein or fat to slow the rise in blood sugar
Vegetables	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, peas, winter squash) eaten in large, unmeasured portions	Non-starchy vegetables - broccoli, spinach, peppers, green beans, cucumbers - eaten freely, filling about half your plate
Legumes, Nuts & Seeds	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Candy-coated or heavily salted nuts in large amounts	Lentils, chickpeas, and black beans, about 1/2 to 3/4 cup per serving; nuts and seeds, a small handful (about 1 oz), a few times a week
Beverages	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Regular soda, sweetened tea, fruit punch, and sports drinks	Water and unsweetened tea or coffee, aiming for about 8 cups a day
	Alcohol only in strict moderation and always with food, since it can cause blood sugar to drop unexpectedly

Snacks & Sweets	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Candy, pastries, cookies, and other foods with added sugar	A small handful of nuts, plain Greek yogurt with berries, or vegetable sticks with hummus; occasional small treats can fit into a meal plan with some carbohydrate planning
Fats & Oils	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Butter, lard, and foods fried in oil that has been reused multiple times	Olive oil, canola oil, and avocado - unsaturated fats that support heart health, a common concern alongside diabetes
Sauces & Condiments	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Ketchup, barbecue sauce, and sweetened salad dressings, which often contain added sugar	Mustard, vinegar-based dressings, salsa, and hot sauce in normal serving amounts
Meal Timing & Portions	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Skipping meals and then eating a very large meal, which can cause large blood sugar swings	Regular, evenly spaced meals with a consistent amount of carbohydrate at each sitting
	The "plate method" is a simple visual guide: fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables, one quarter with lean protein, and one quarter with carbohydrate
Sweeteners	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Table sugar, honey, agave, and high-fructose corn syrup added in large or frequent amounts	Non-nutritive sweeteners (stevia, monk fruit, sucralose) in moderation, and for the short term, to help reduce overall sugar intake
Soups	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Cream-based soups and canned soups high in sodium	Broth- or vegetable-based soups, homemade or reduced-sodium, most days of the week
Herbs, Spices & Seasonings	
What to Avoid	Preferred
	Garlic, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, black pepper, and most dried herbs - freely, as seasonings have little to no effect on blood sugar
Fast Food & Dining Out	
What to Avoid	Preferred
Fried entrees, sugary beverages, and large refined-carbohydrate portions (large fries, sub rolls, sweetened sauces)	Grilled proteins, a side salad or non-starchy vegetable, and water; asking for sauces on the side. Splitting a large portion in half, or boxing half to take home, helps keep carbohydrate amounts consistent

References

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