

# Diabetes



## About Us

The Sherwood Park – Strathcona Primary Care Network (SPPCN) is one of 41 PCNs operating in Alberta. PCNs represent Alberta’s strategy to reform the delivery of primary care. Primary care is a term used to describe the care that patients receive when they first contact the health system and primary care services are typically provided by a family physician.

The SPPCN is a joint venture between a group of family physicians, representing participating physicians in Strathcona County, and Alberta Health Services (AHS) – Edmonton Zone who come together to improve the quality of care and access to health services for the people of Strathcona County, which has a population of about 100,000 residents.

### Introduction

This *Diabetes* course is one of many education sessions delivered by the SPPCN aimed at providing participants with the information they need to manage their symptoms and improve their quality of life.

This session will give attendants practical ideas, encouragement and link them to important resources to manage their diabetes in the short and long-term.

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## What Is Prediabetes & Diabetes?

### Prediabetes

Prediabetes is when your blood sugar (glucose) levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be called diabetes (*Healthy Eating with Prediabetes, Alberta Health Services, 2014*).

### Diabetes

Diabetes is when your blood sugar (glucose) levels are higher than normal. For some people, this is because the insulin in their body doesn’t work as well as it did before. For other people, their body isn’t making any insulin, or isn’t making enough insulin (*Healthy Eating for Diabetes, Alberta Health Services, 2015*).

# Lifestyle Management

## Weight management & healthy eating

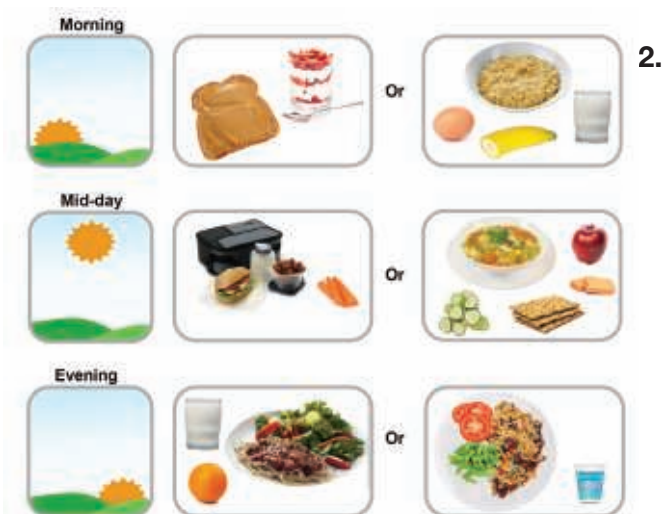
The following material has been adapted from Alberta Health Services' handouts: *Healthy Meals for Diabetes (2017)* and *Healthy Eating for Diabetes (2015)*.

Weight management and healthy eating go hand-in-hand to help you manage your diabetes. You are encouraged to keep the information as an ongoing reference tool.

## Healthy eating to manage diabetes

### 1. Eat 3 meals per day

Spreading your food over the day helps control blood sugar. Snacks can reduce hunger between meals. Include snacks if they help you eat smaller portions at your next meal.



### Spread carbohydrates over the day

Your body uses carbohydrate foods for energy. Carbohydrate foods raise your blood sugar. It's important to spread them over the day into smaller meals and snacks.

Carbohydrate foods have sugar and starch:

- grains (wheat, oats, rice, barley, rye)
- foods made from grains (bread, tortillas, bannock, naan, roti, pasta, cereal)
- beans, lentils
- fruits
- starchy vegetables (potatoes, yams, corn, squash, parsnips)
- milk
- yogurt

- sweet foods, desserts
- sugar (table sugar, honey, molasses)

Eat a variety of carbohydrate foods every day to get enough calories (energy), fibre, vitamins, and minerals.

**A meal that looks like the one below can help you to spread carbohydrates over the day.**



- Fill ½ your plate with vegetables.
- Put grains and starchy vegetables on ¼ of your plate. Some starchy vegetables are potatoes, yams, corn, squash and parsnips.
- Put Meat and Alternatives on ¼ of your plate.

### 3. Portion sizes

Choosing healthy portions of food can help you manage your diabetes and reach and stay at a healthy weight. Below is a handy guide to help you choose healthy portion sizes:

- Use your **fist** to guide your portions of grain products and fruit.
- A portion of vegetables can be as much as you could hold in **both hands**.
- Use the **palm** of your hand to guide your portions of meat, fish or poultry.
- A portion of Milk and Alternatives is **1 cup** (250 mL) of milk or **¾ cup** (175 mL) of plain or no sugar added yogurt.





#### 4. Limit sweet foods and foods with added sugars

Sweet foods and foods with added sugar quickly raise blood sugar. Use the tips below to reduce the amount of added sugar you eat and drink:

- Drink water or sugar-free drinks instead of juice or drinks with added sugar like regular pop, iced tea, and sugar-sweetened coffee and tea drinks.
- 100% fruit juice doesn't have added sugar, but has a lot of natural sugar. Limit 100% juice to ½ cup (125 mL) a day.
- Limit sugar, jam, honey, desserts, candy, syrups and sweet sauces.
- To sweeten foods like coffee, tea, baking, jams, jellies, and syrups, you can use low-calorie or no-calorie sugar substitutes. Ask your dietitian about using sugar substitutes.

#### 5. Eat more fibre

Eating more fibre helps you manage your blood sugar levels. Fibre at each meal slows the digestion of food and slows the movement of sugar into your blood. This helps to keep blood sugar from rising too high after a meal.

Eating more fibre may also help lower your risk of heart disease. Use the following tips to eat more fibre:

- Choose higher fibre and whole grain foods more often. High fibre foods have 4 or more grams of fibre in one serving.
- Choose whole grain breads, cereals, crackers, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat couscous, quinoa, barley, oats, and brown rice.
- Eat high fibre cereal often, by itself or mixed with another cereal.
- Eat legumes such as peas, beans, and lentils often. Add them to soups, casseroles, salads and spaghetti sauce.
- Choose vegetable or fruit at every meal and snack.
- Eat these fruits more often: oranges, berries, pears, plums.
- Drink more fluid when you increase the amount of fibre you eat. Fibre holds fluid in the stool, which keeps stool soft.
- Drink at least 9-12 cups (2.25-3L) of fluid each day. Water, lower fat milk, and unflavoured soy beverages are the healthiest choices.

#### 6. Limit salt intake

- Use herbs and spices for flavouring instead of salt.
- Add little or no salt to cooking or to food at the table.
- Eat less canned, processed and packaged foods. Read the Nutrition Facts tables on food labels to find foods lower in sodium.

## 7. Limit alcohol intake

Ask your doctor if drinking alcohol is safe for you. Alcohol may affect your blood sugar control. If you use alcohol, follow *Canada's Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines*:

- Women: 2 or less drinks per day or 10 or less drinks per week
- Men: 3 or less drinks per day or 15 or less drinks per week

One drink of alcohol is:

- 12 ounces (341 mL) of beer and cider
- 5 ounces (142 mL) of wine
- 1 ½ ounces (43 mL) of liquor

Alcohol is high in calories. Mixes such as juice or regular pop add sugar and more calories to alcohol. Limit higher sugar drinks like coolers, liqueurs, dessert wines and mixed drinks.

## 8. Choose small amounts of healthy fat

People with diabetes are more likely to get heart disease. Eating these *fats in small amounts* can decrease your risk. Some heart healthy fats are listed below:

- Oils: olive, canola, peanut, sunflower
- Non-hydrogenated margarine
- Nuts and seeds and nut butters
- Ground flax seeds, chia seeds or hemp seeds – add these to foods like yogurt, salads or hot cereals

Use the tip of your thumb to guide your portions of oils and fats.



### Cut down on saturated fat

Eating saturated fats may increase your risk of heart disease. Use the ideas below:

#### Milk and Alternatives

- Choose lower fat milk products like milk, yogurt and cheese.
- Limit lard and butter.

Your thumb is the size of a portion of most cheeses.

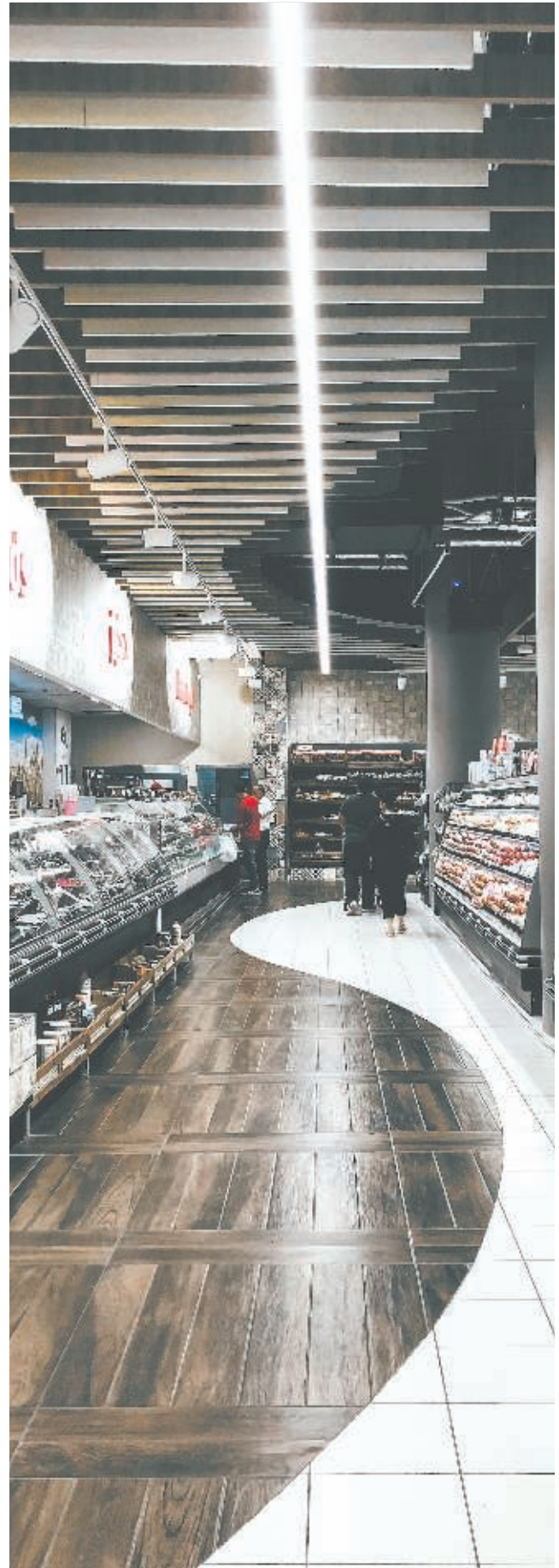
#### Meat and Alternatives

- Choose lean meats. Limit processed meat like bacon, wieners, deli meat and sausage.
- Eat fish at least two times each week.
- Choose beans, peas, lentils, and tofu more often.

#### Sweets and snack foods

- Look for foods with little or no trans fat in the Nutrition Facts table on food packages.

Cutting back on fat may decrease your calories and help



# Sample Meal Ideas

The meal ideas on the next pages show how you can use some of the eating choices in this handout. These are examples only – the best meals for you may look different from these. There is space to write your own ideas for meals.

Look at the smaller meal plan on this page if you are less active or are trying to eat smaller portions. Look at the larger meal plan on the next page if you're active or have a larger appetite. Drink water throughout the day.

SMALLER MEAL PLAN	MY MEAL PLAN
<b>BREAKFAST</b>	<b>BREAKFAST</b>
1 whole grain English muffin 1 cup (250 mL) skim or 1% milk 1 egg scrambled with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ ounce (15 g) low fat cheese</li> <li>• ½ cup (125 mL) onions, tomato, mushrooms</li> </ul>	
<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
1 cup (250 mL) lentil soup 3-4 whole grain crackers (30 grams) ¾ cup (175 grams) plain or no sugar added yogurt ½ cup (125 mL) carrots	
<b>SUPPER</b>	<b>SUPPER</b>
2 ½ ounces (75 grams) baked salmon ⅔ cup (150 mL) brown rice, cooked 1 cup (250 mL) steamed green beans 1 tsp (5 mL) soft, non-hydrogenated margarine ½ cup (125 mL) sliced tomatoes 1 small pear	

Snacks - If you need help to keep portions smaller at meals, have a small snack between meals.

SNACKS FOR A SMALLER MEAL PLAN (EACH BULLET IS ONE SNACK)
1 apple, sliced with cinnamon 3 cups (750 mL) plain popcorn with dill or Italian herbs 1 cup (250 mL) carrots, celery, cucumbers with 2 Tbsp (30 mL) low fat dressing or ¼ cup (60 mL) hummus 3-6 (30 grams) whole grain or rye crackers ¾ cup (175 mL) low fat yogurt, plain or no sugar added 1 cup (250 mL) low fat milk or fortified unsweetened soy beverage ¼ cup (60 mL) low sodium cottage cheese with ½ cup (125 mL) pineapple chunks, drained

## Manage Your Weight

If you're at a healthy weight, try to stay there.

If you have extra weight, losing even 5-10% of your weight may help manage your blood sugars. For example, a person that weighs 220 pounds (100 kg) would try to lose 11-22 pounds (5-10 kg).

Healthy weight loss is up to 1-2 pounds (0.5-1kg) a week.

LARGER MEAL PLAN	MY MEAL PLAN
<b>BREAKFAST</b>	<b>BREAKFAST</b>
1 ½ cups (375 mL) cooked oatmeal 2 Tbsp (30 mL) ground chia seeds pinch of cinnamon ½ cup (125 mL) berries 1 cup (250 mL) skim or 1% milk	
<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
Chicken sandwich with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 slices of whole grain bread</li> <li>• 2 ½ ounces (75 grams) chicken breast, sliced</li> <li>• 1 ounce (30 grams) low fat cheese</li> <li>• ⅙ avocado, sliced</li> <li>• ½ cup (125 mL) lettuce</li> <li>• 1 Tbsp (15 mL) mustard</li> </ul> ½ (125 mL) cucumber, sliced ½ cup (125 mL) skim or 1% milk 1 medium apple	
<b>SUPPER</b>	<b>SUPPER</b>
2 ½ ounces (75 grams) lean steak 1 cup (250 mL) baked yams ½ cup (125 mL) roasted cauliflower 1 cup (250 mL) mixed greens 2 Tbsp (30 mL) sunflower seeds 1 Tbsp (15 mL) light dressing 1 cup (250 mL) skim or 1% milk 15 grapes or 1 cup (250 mL)	

Snacks - If you need help to keep portions smaller at meals, have a small snack between meals.

SNACKS FOR A LARGER MEAL PLAN (EACH BULLET IS ONE SNACK)
1 cup (250 mL) carrots, celery, cucumbers with 2 Tbsp (30 mL) low fat dressing or ¼ cup (60 mL) hummus 2-3 rye crackers and 1 ounce (30 grams) low fat cheese 1 slice of whole grain toast with 1 Tbsp (15 mL) nut butter, and ½ banana sliced on top ¼ cup (60 mL) unsalted nuts ¾ cup (175 mL) low fat plain Greek yogurt with ½ cup (125 mL) sliced strawberries, and 1/3 cup (75 mL) bran cereal 1 (30 gram) high-fibre granola bar (4 grams of fibre or higher) ½ tuna sandwich



The following information contains additional tips on managing your diet and weight and is adapted from *Diabetes Canada's Glycemic Index Food Guide* and reflects the *Canadian Diabetes Association 2013 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Diabetes in Canada, 2013, The Canadian Diabetes Association*.

# Glycemic Index Food Guide

The glycemic index (GI) is a scale that ranks a carbohydrate-containing food or drink by how much it raises blood sugar levels after it is eaten or drunk. Foods with a high GI increase blood sugar higher and faster than foods with a low GI.

## There are three GI categories:



### GO

Low GI (55 or less) Choose Most Often



### CAUTION

Medium GI (56 to 69) Choose Less Often



### STOP AND THINK

High GI (70 or more) Choose Least Often

Foods in the high GI category can be swapped with foods in the medium and, or low GI category to lower GI.

## A low GI diet may help you:

- decrease risk of type 2 diabetes and its complications
- decrease risk of heart disease and stroke
- feel full longer
- maintain and lose weight

## Try these meal-planning ideas to lower meal GI:

- Cook your pasta al dente (firm). Check your pasta package instructions for cooking time.
- Make fruits and milk part of your meal plate (refer to page 3). These foods often have a low GI and make a healthy dessert.
- Try lower GI grains, such as barley and bulgur.
- Pulses (dry, edible seeds of plants in the legume family) can be grains and starches or meat and alternatives. Swap half of your higher GI starch food serving with beans, lentils or chickpeas. For example, instead of having 1 cup of cooked short grain rice, have ½ cup of cooked rice mixed with ½ cup of black beans.

## Diabetes Canada recommends choosing lower GI foods and drinks more often to help control blood sugar.

Work with your Health Professional to add foods and drinks to your lists, create action plans that include choosing lower GI foods, adapt your favourite recipes, and find ways to swap or substitute low GI foods into your meal plan.

Checking your blood sugar before, and two hours after, a meal is the best way to know how your body handles certain foods and drinks.

\*\*Remember the plate method on page 3.

Some carbohydrate-containing foods and drinks have so little carbohydrate that they do not have a GI value. This does not mean they cannot be included as part of a healthy diet. Examples include green vegetables, lemons, and some low-carbohydrate drinks. Diabetes Canada calls these foods and drinks “free” because they do not impact the blood sugar of people living with diabetes. You can put free foods in the green category, but they do not have a GI and have not been included in the food lists.



# Grains and Starches



## LOW GLYCEMIC INDEX (55 OR LESS) CHOOSE MOST OFTEN

### Breads:

heavy mixed grain breads  
spelt bread  
sourdough bread  
tortilla (whole grain)

### Cereal:

All-Bran™ cereal  
All-Bran Buds™ with Psyllium cereal  
oat bran  
oats (steel cut)

### Grains:

barley  
bulgur  
mung bean noodles  
pasta (al dente, firm)  
pulse flours  
quinoa  
rice (converted, parboiled)

### Other:

peas  
popcorn  
sweet potato  
winter squash

### Additional foods:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## MEDIUM GLYCEMIC INDEX (56 TO 69) CHOOSE LESS OFTEN

### Breads:

chapati (white, whole wheat)  
flaxseed/linseed bread  
pita bread (white, whole wheat)  
pumpernickel bread  
roti (white, whole wheat)  
rye bread (light, dark, whole grain)  
stone ground whole wheat bread  
whole grain wheat bread

### Cereal:

Cream of Wheat™ (regular)  
oats (instant)  
oats (large flake)  
oats (quick)

### Grains:

basmati rice  
brown rice  
cornmeal  
couscous  
(regular, whole wheat)  
rice noodles  
white rice (short, long grain)  
wild rice

### Other:

beets\*  
corn  
french fries ▶  
parsnip  
potato (red, white, cooled)  
rye crisp crackers  
(e.g. Ryvita Rye Crispbread™)  
Stoned Wheat Thins™  
crackers

### Additional foods:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## HIGH GLYCEMIC INDEX (70 OR MORE) CHOOSE LEAST OFTEN

### Breads:

bread (white, whole wheat)  
naan (white, whole wheat)

### Cereal:

All-Bran Flakes™ cereal  
Corn Flakes™ Cereal  
Cream of Wheat™ (instant)  
puffed wheat cereal  
Rice Krispies™ cereal  
Special K™ cereal

### Grains:

jasmine rice  
millet  
sticky rice  
white rice (instant)

### Other:

carrots\*  
potato (instant mashed)  
potato (red, white, hot)  
pretzels  
rice cakes  
soda crackers

### Additional foods:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

▶ \*items with this symbol are 'sometimes foods'

\* Most starchy or sweet vegetables (e.g. peas, parsnip, winter squash) provide 15 g or more carbohydrate per 1 cup serving. Beets and carrots often provide less than 15 g carbohydrate per serving (marked above with \*). Most non-starchy (or free) vegetables (e.g. tomato and lettuce) have not been assigned a GI because they have very little carbohydrate and have very little effect on blood sugar.

# Fruits



**LOW GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(55 OR LESS)  
CHOOSE MOST OFTEN**

- apple
- apricot (fresh, dried)
- banana (green, unripe)
- berries
- cantaloupe
- grapefruit
- honeydew melon
- mango
- orange
- peach
- pear
- plum
- pomegranate
- prunes

**Additional foods:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**MEDIUM GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(56 TO 69)  
CHOOSE LESS OFTEN**

- banana (ripe, yellow)
- cherries (bottled)
- cherries (fresh)
- cranberries (dried)
- figs (fresh, dried)
- grapes
- kiwi
- lychee
- pineapple
- raisins

**Additional foods:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**HIGH GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(70 OR MORE)  
CHOOSE LEAST OFTEN**

- banana (brown, overripe)
- watermelon

**Additional foods:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Some fruits have not been assigned a GI because they contain less than 15 g of available carbohydrate per serving (e.g. lemon and lime).

\*items with this symbol are 'sometimes foods'

## Blood Sugar Testing

### Self-Monitoring Blood Sugars



**fasting & before a meal**  
4 to 7 mmol/L



**2 hours after a meal**  
5 to 10 mmol/L

### Benefits of Self-Monitoring

- provides quick measurements of your blood sugars
- determines if you are high or low
- shows how your lifestyle and medications affect your blood sugars
- helps you and your diabetes healthcare team to make lifestyle and medication changes

### Where do I get a Blood Glucose Meter and Training?

- PCN diabetes healthcare team
- community pharmacy

# Milk, Alternatives & Other Beverages



**LOW GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(55 OR LESS)**

**CHOOSE MOST OFTEN**

- almond milk
- cow milk (skim, 1%, 2%, whole)
- frozen yogurt ▶
- greek yogurt
- soy milk
- yogurt (skim, 1%, 2%, whole)

**Additional foods:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**MEDIUM GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(56 TO 69)**

**CHOOSE LESS OFTEN**

- 
- 
- 

**Additional foods:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**HIGH GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(70 OR MORE)**

**CHOOSE LEAST OFTEN**

- rice milk
- 
- 

**Additional foods:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Milk, alternatives, and other beverages listed include flavoured (e.g. chocolate), sweetened and unsweetened varieties.

# Meat and Alternatives



**LOW GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(55 OR LESS)**

**CHOOSE MOST OFTEN**

- baked beans
- chickpeas
- kidney beans
- lentils
- mung beans
- romano beans
- soybeans or edamame
- split peas

**Additional foods:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**MEDIUM GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(56 TO 69)**

**CHOOSE LESS OFTEN**

- lentil soup (ready-made)
- split pea soup (ready-made)
- 

**Additional foods:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



**HIGH GLYCEMIC INDEX  
(70 OR MORE)**

**CHOOSE LEAST OFTEN**

- 
- 
- 

Meat, poultry and fish do not have a GI because they do not contain carbohydrate. When 1/2 cup or more of pulses are eaten, they can be included in the Grains and Starches food group or the Meats and Alternatives group.

▶ \*items with this symbol are 'sometimes foods'

The following is adapted from Diabetes Canada's *Physical activity and diabetes* handout and reflects the 2018 Diabetes Canada Clinical Practice Guidelines published by The Canadian Diabetes Association. More information can be found at [diabetes.ca](http://diabetes.ca).

# Physical Activity & Diabetes

## Why is activity so important for people with diabetes?



Almost everyone, whether or not they have diabetes, benefits from regular exercise. Well-known health benefits include weight loss, stronger bones, improved blood pressure control, lower rates of heart disease and cancer as well as increased energy levels.

Regular exercise also has special advantages if you have type 2 diabetes. Regular physical activity improves your body's sensitivity to insulin and helps manage your blood sugar levels.

## Safety first

- If you have been inactive for some time, talk to your doctor before starting any exercise program that is more strenuous than brisk walking.

- Make sure you wear comfortable, proper-fitting shoes.
- Wear your MedicAlert® bracelet or necklace.
- Listen to your body. Speak to your doctor if you are very short of breath or have chest pain.
- If you take insulin or medications that increase insulin levels, monitor your blood sugar before, during and many hours after your activity to see how it affects your blood sugar levels.
- Carry some form of fast-acting carbohydrate with you in case you need to treat low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), for example, glucose tablets or Life Savers®.
- If you live with type 1 diabetes, speak to your health-care provider about additional strategies to reduce the risk of hypoglycemia during and after exercise.

	MINUTES	TIMES PER WEEK
 MY PLAN FOR AEROBIC EXERCISE IS:		
 MY PLAN FOR RESISTANCE EXERCISE IS:		



## Keep Going!

Habits can be hard to change, so be prepared with a plan in case your motivation starts to fade:

- Do something you like! It is hard to stick to an activity that is not fun. It may take you a few tries before you find the activity that is right for you.
- Have a support network. Ask your family, friends and co-workers to help you stay motivated by joining you for a walk or a workout at the gym.
- Set small, attainable goals and celebrate when you reach them. Reward yourself in healthy ways.
- Add physical activity to your daily routine. While you are working or watching TV, get up every 20-30 minutes.
- Seek professional help from a personal trainer, or someone knowledgeable who can help you find a fitness regimen that will work for you.
- Using a step monitor (pedometer or accelerometer) can be helpful to track your activity.
- Physical activity and diabetes can be a complex issue. For more information, talk to your health care team or visit [diabetes.ca](http://diabetes.ca).

Regardless of your age, making the decision to become more physically active is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself and the people who love you. Take that first step today!

## How much is enough?

Your goal should be to complete **at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise each week**, (e.g. 30 minutes, 5 days a week).

You may have to start slowly, with as little as 5 to 10 minutes of exercise per day, gradually building up to your goal. The good news, though, is that multiple, shorter exercise sessions of at least 10 minutes, adding up to 90-140 minutes per week, can have some benefits for people with diabetes.

As you begin your exercise program and continue to build on it, be sure that you have no more than 2 consecutive days without exercise.

If you are able and when you are ready, try adding **resistance exercises like lifting weights 2-3 times a week**.

When you add resistance exercise, you should get some help from a qualified exercise specialist.

Note: You may consider **interval training** to increase improvements in fitness levels for type 2 diabetes, and



## What kind of activity is best?

Both aerobic and resistance exercise are important for people living with diabetes.

### **Aerobic exercise**

Aerobic exercise is continuous exercise such as walking, bicycling or jogging that elevates breathing and heart rate.

### **Resistance exercise**

Resistance exercise involves brief repetitive exercises with weights, weight machines, resistance bands or one's own body weight to build muscle strength. If you decide to begin resistance exercise, you should first get some instruction from a qualified exercise specialist, a diabetes educator or exercise resource (such as a video or brochure) and start slowly.

### **Interval training**

Interval training involves short periods of vigorous exercise such as running or cycling, alternating with 30 second to 3 minute recovery periods at low-to-moderate intensity or, rest.

to lower the risk of hypoglycemia in type 1 diabetes. Speak with your health care provider or qualified exercise specialist if you plan to start interval training.

Related Diabetes Canada articles: *Benefits of physical activity*, *Planning for regular physical activity*, *Introductory resistance program*, *Maintaining aerobic exercise*, and *Resistance exercise guidelines*

The following information is adapted from *Setting Goals for Lifestyle Change (2018)*, published by Alberta Health Services.

# Introduction To Goal Setting

## Setting Goals for Lifestyle Change

If you are ready to make a change, it can help to start with one or two goals, and break them down into smaller steps. Change can be hard, especially if we try to make too many changes at once. You are more likely to achieve smaller goals.

This worksheet can help you to set a goal that is important to you and that you can achieve. You are the expert in your life and the best judge of what will work for you.

### Step 1: Choose a goal that is important to you

What goal is most important to you that you are ready to work on right now?

Action-based goals give you the best chance at success with achieving your goal. They focus on actions that are in your control rather than focusing on the outcomes of your actions, which can sometimes be unpredictable.

Examples of action-based goals are: Eating more fibre or eating more vegetables and fruit.

Examples of outcomes are: Decreasing your blood glucose or losing weight.

#### A goal that is most important for me right now is:

*Example: eating more fibre*

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### Step 2: Break your goal into smaller goals

There are often smaller steps you can take toward your goal. Breaking your goal into smaller goals can give you more success.

#### A goal that I can work on first is:

*Example: One way that I can break my goal of eating more fibre into a smaller goal is to start eating a high fibre cereal at breakfast.*

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### Step 3: Make your goal SMART

You are more likely to achieve a goal that is specific, measurable, attainable, rewarding, and timely. These are often called SMART goals. Answer the questions below to make your goal SMART.

#### S is for Specific

##### What are you going to do?

##### How are you going to do it?

##### Where are you going to do it?

##### Who will help you do it?

*Example: I will eat a high fibre cereal two days a week for breakfast at home before leaving for work.*

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#### M is for Measurable

##### How will you measure your goal?

##### Include details such as how much, how many, and how often.

*Example: I will eat one serving of a high fibre cereal for breakfast on Mondays and Wednesdays*

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#### A is for Attainable

##### Is your goal something you can do with everything else going on in your life?

*Example: I plan to start eating a high fibre cereal breakfast two days a week because right now I don't eat breakfast at all, and I want to be realistic. I will start with Mondays and Wednesdays because I have more time to eat at home on those days.*

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#### R is for Rewarding

##### What makes your goal important to you?

*Example: Eating more fibre is important to me because it is a lifestyle change that I can make now. It will help me be*

healthy for myself and be a role model for my children.

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### T is for Timely

**When will you start your goal?**

**When will you plan to review your goal?**

*Example: I'll start tomorrow. I'll review my goal in four weeks.*

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### Step 4: Finish your plan

Prepare for things that might get in the way of achieving your goal

There may be things that could get in the way of achieving your goal. For example:

- a busy schedule
- a special occasion coming up
- recent illness
- someone that may not support your goal
- bad weather
- travel during the time you set for your goal
- low energy

**Things that might get in the way of achieving my goal are:**

*Example: I am busy in the mornings.*

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Before these things happen, you can make a plan to deal with them. Is there anything that has worked well for you in the past?

**My plan for dealing with things that might get in the way of achieving my goal is:**

*Example: I will portion out my high fibre breakfast cereal the night before.*

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**List people who can support you in working toward your goal.**

*Is there anyone who can support you with your goal?*

*Examples might include a:*

- family member
- a friend
- a co-worker

People who can support me:

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They can help me by:

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My plan to get their support:

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### Make a plan to track your goal

Keeping track of your progress can help you achieve your goal. It can also show you which parts of your plan are working well, and which are not.

There are many ways that you can record your progress, such as writing in a journal or using an app. Write down a plan below for what you will record, how you will record it, and how often you will record it.

**My plan for keeping track of my goal is:**

*Example: I will add a check mark to my calendar every day that I eat a high fibre cereal for breakfast.*

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### Make a plan to reward yourself

People who plan to reward themselves when they achieve their goal often have more success.

Choose a reward that is important for you. Some people use rewards like:

- downloading a new song to a playlist
- borrowing a book from the library
- inviting a friend over for coffee or tea
- taking a relaxing bath
- buying a new journal
- watching a movie

How do you plan to reward yourself when you achieve your goal? Be as detailed as possible. Include when you will receive your reward and how much you will receive.

**When I achieve my goal, I plan to reward myself by:**

*Example: Every week, after I have eaten a high fibre breakfast cereal on Monday and Wednesday, I will download a new song to my playlist.*

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