

# Healthy Eating

## The Basics



Healthy eating is an important part of managing diabetes.

Ask your family health care provider to refer you to a registered dietitian. You may also visit [ontario.ca/eatright](http://ontario.ca/eatright), or call 1-877-510-510-2 to speak to an EatRight Ontario registered dietitian about developing a menu plan that is right for you. Meanwhile, here are some tips to help you get started.

Tips	Reason
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 a better option.
Limit the amount of high-fat foods 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.
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.
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. Vegetables are very high in nutrients and low in calories.
Talk to your family health care provider about whether you can include alcohol in your meal plan and how much is safe.	Alcohol can affect blood glucose levels and cause you to gain weight.
If you are thirsty, drink water.	Drinking regular pop and fruit juice will raise your blood glucose level.
Be physically active.	Regular physical activity will improve your blood glucose control.

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. You can also speak to an EatRight Ontario registered dietitian free of charge at 1-877-510-510-2 or visit EatRight Ontario at [ontario.ca/eatright](http://ontario.ca/eatright)

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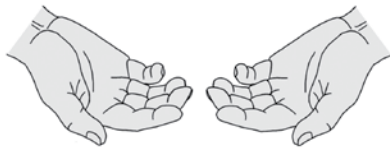
## Making sense of portion sizes

Keep your eye on portion sizes – in addition to what you eat, how much you eat is a very important factor. Have portion sizes that will help you reach or maintain a healthy body weight. The following tool can give you an idea of what appropriate portion sizes are.



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

Choose an amount the size of your fist for each of grains and starches, and fruit.



### VEGETABLES\*:

Choose as much as you can hold in both hands.



### MEAT and 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 and ALTERNATIVES\*:

Drink up to 250 mL (8 oz) of low-fat milk<sup>+</sup> with a meal.

## Sample Meal Plans

For smaller appetites	For bigger appetites
<p><b>Breakfast:</b></p> <p>Cold cereal (1/2 cup, 125 mL)</p> <p>Whole-grain toast (1 slice)</p> <p>1 orange</p> <p>Low-fat milk<sup>+</sup> (1 cup, 250 mL)</p> <p>Peanut butter (2 tbsp, 30 mL)</p> <p>Tea or coffee</p> <p><b>Lunch:</b></p> <p>1 sandwich</p> <p>2 slices of whole-grain bread or 6" pita</p> <p>meat, chicken or fish (2 oz, 60 g)</p> <p>non-hydrogenated margarine (1 tsp, 5 mL)</p> <p>Carrot sticks</p> <p>Low-fat plain yogurt (3/4 cup, 175 mL)</p> <p>Tea or coffee</p> <p><b>Dinner:</b></p> <p>1 medium potato or rice (2/3 cup, 150 mL)</p> <p>Vegetables</p> <p>Non-hydrogenated margarine (1 tsp, 5 mL)</p> <p>Lean meat, chicken or fish (2 oz, 60 g)</p> <p>Cantaloupe (1 cup, 250 mL)</p> <p>Low-fat milk<sup>+</sup> (1 cup, 250 mL)</p> <p>Tea or coffee</p> <p><b>Evening Snack:</b></p> <p>Low-fat cheese (1 oz, 30 g)</p> <p>Whole-grain crackers (4)</p>	<p><b>Breakfast:</b></p> <p>Cold cereal (1/2 cup, 125 mL)</p> <p>Whole-grain toast (2 slices)</p> <p>1 orange</p> <p>Low-fat milk<sup>+</sup> (1 cup, 250 mL)</p> <p>Low-fat cheese (2 oz, 60 g)</p> <p>Tea or coffee</p> <p><b>Lunch:</b></p> <p>Soup (1 cup, 250 mL)</p> <p>1 sandwich</p> <p>2 slices of whole-grain bread or 6" pita</p> <p>lean meat, chicken or fish (3 oz, 90 g)</p> <p>tomato slices</p> <p>non-hydrogenated margarine (1 tsp, 5 mL)</p> <p>Carrot sticks</p> <p>Low-fat plain yogurt (3/4 cup, 175 mL)</p> <p>Tea or coffee</p> <p><b>Afternoon Snack:</b></p> <p>1 medium apple or small banana</p> <p><b>Dinner:</b></p> <p>1 large potato or cooked noodles (1 1/2 cup, 375 mL)</p> <p>Vegetables</p> <p>Green salad with low-fat salad dressing</p> <p>Lean meat, chicken or fish (4 oz, 120 g)</p> <p>1 medium pear</p> <p>Low-fat milk<sup>+</sup> (1 cup, 250 mL)</p> <p>Tea or coffee</p> <p><b>Evening Snack:</b></p> <p>Peanut butter (4 tbsp, 60 mL)</p> <p>Whole-grain crackers (4)</p> <p>Low-fat milk<sup>+</sup> (1 cup, 250 mL)</p>

\* 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.

<sup>+</sup> If you are lactose intolerant, try a fortified soy beverage.

Read the nutrition facts and look at the label on food packaging to make healthy food choices.

### Serving size

Compare the serving size on the package to the amount that you eat.

% daily value tells you how much of a particular nutrient is found in one serving. Compare similar products. Choose foods with a lower % daily value of fat and a higher % daily value of fibre.

### Fat

- Choose foods with a lower fat content
- Choose foods with little or no saturated fat
- Choose foods with no trans fat

### Cholesterol

- Choose foods with little or no cholesterol
- Aim for less than 200 mg of cholesterol per day

### Fibre

- Choose foods high in fibre
- Aim for 25 g to 35 g or more of fibre per day

Read the ingredient list on food packages. Avoid foods containing these fats:

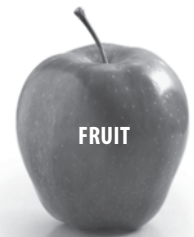
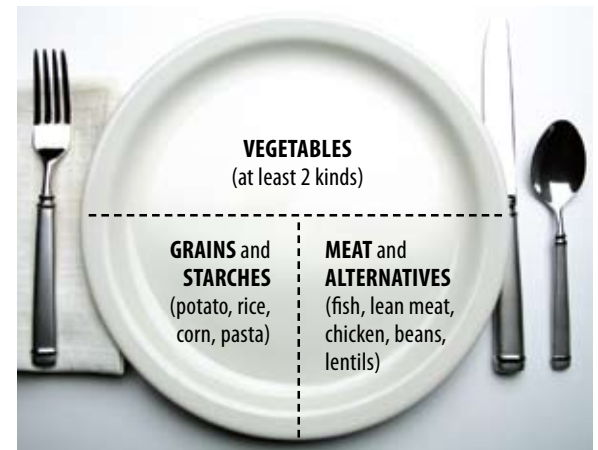
- Hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil, shortening
- Tropical fats/oils such as coconut, palm, palm kernel

For more information on food labels, visit [healthyeatingisinstore.ca](http://healthyeatingisinstore.ca).

For more information on eating healthy, watch the “Managing Your Nutrition” video, which is part of this kit.



### A Balanced Diet



- Have foods from at least three out of the four key food groups from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* at each meal:

Vegetables and Fruit

Grain Products

Milk and Alternatives

Meat and Alternatives

- Include fish, lean meats, low-fat cheeses, eggs or vegetarian protein choices (tofu, legumes, lentils) as part of your meal.
- Have a glass of milk and a piece of fruit to complete your meal.

Be sure to eat breakfast. It provides a good start to your day.

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Tip for portion control: Use a luncheon plate instead of a dinner plate. Research shows that people who are presented with larger containers of food eat more than those eating from smaller containers.



Make lower-fat choices (e.g., use skim milk, lower-fat cheese, and lean ground beef, trim fat on meat, chicken etc., and only use small amounts of added fat such as oil and/or salad dressing).

## Tips for eating away from home

- Stop eating when you are full; take extra food home
- Skip or share appetizers or snacks
- Ask for sauces on the side and use sparingly
- Order from the menu instead of going to the buffet
- Balance the choice that you feel is less healthy with a healthier choice (e.g., fried chicken with baked potato instead of French fries)

**Sugars and sweetened foods may be eaten in moderation by people with diabetes. Their effect on blood glucose levels will vary. Talk to your dietitian about how to fit sweeteners and sweetened foods into your diet.**

This document reflects our  
**CPG**  
Clinical Practice Guidelines

Content taken from the Canadian Diabetes Association's consumer fact sheet, *Just the Basics* © 2009.