

# Diabetes: Questions to Ask Yourself About Your Eating Habits

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## **Am I eating a variety of foods?**

A healthy meal plan includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low fat milk products, lean meat or meat alternatives.

## **Am I skipping meals? Do I go longer than 4-6 hours without eating anything? Am I snacking around the clock?**

Eating 3 balanced meals and maybe one snack around the same times each day can make it easier to manage your blood sugar.

## **How much am I really eating?**

Check the nutrition facts labels and measure some portions to learn more about your serving sizes. A general guideline of 45-60 grams of carbohydrates per meal and maybe a snack with 15-30 grams of carbohydrates can be a good starting point. Ask your doctor for a referral to a dietitian to tailor a plan for you.

## **What am I drinking?**

Regular soda/pop, juice, sport drinks or any beverages that contain calories/ carbohydrates will raise your blood sugar very quickly and can add up to more carbohydrates than a whole meal. Water, flavored water, or artificially sweetened beverages that contain 0g carbohydrate will not affect your blood sugar.

## **How does food affect my blood sugar?**

**Check regularly.** Foods that contain carbohydrates raise your blood sugar, but carbs are still a very important part of a healthy meal plan. Checking your blood sugar (using the guide on Blood Glucose/Sugar Monitoring Handout and logbook) can help you learn how many carbs will work for you.

Keep a record of your blood sugars and work with your health care team to correct levels that are too high or too low.

## **What about carbohydrates?**

Carbohydrates or “carbs” provide your body with the energy it needs for physical activity and healthy organ function - you need carbs!

Eating too many carbs can cause high blood sugar; not eating enough carbs can cause low blood sugar.

Learn what the right balance is for you by checking your blood sugar before and about 2 hours after meals.

Where do your carbs come from? Food sources of carbohydrates include grains (bread, rice, pasta, wheat and others), fruits, starchy vegetables (i.e. potatoes, corn, and peas), legumes (beans and lentils), milk, yogurt and milk products (i.e. soy milk, rice milk), sweets and many drinks

## **What else can affect my blood sugar?**

Exercise lowers blood sugar. Stress raises blood sugar. Certain medications can also affect blood sugar.

## **Can I set aside 30 minutes a day for exercise?**

Exercise daily: Get moving every day—dance, bike, swim, walk, do yoga, chair exercises, the options are endless! Walking is a great way to start! (Even 10-15 minutes can make a difference).

## **What about my medicine?**

Talk with your doctor, pharmacist or dietitian about side effects and how to take your medicine. Timing can make a difference.

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