

## Diabetes

**What is diabetes?** - Diabetes means that your blood glucose (also called blood sugar) levels are higher than normal. **What is prediabetes?** - With prediabetes, blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. If you are prediabetic, you have a higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Having diabetes increases your risk for heart disease, kidney disease, nerve damage, and loss of vision.

**What happens in our body?** - Carbohydrates (carbs or CHO's) provide your body & brain with energy. It is **important** to include carbs in your diet. Our body breaks down carbs, from the food we eat, into glucose (sugar). With the help of insulin, a hormone produced in the pancreas, cells in the body absorb this glucose & use it for energy. If you have diabetes, your body does not make enough insulin, or does not use insulin properly.

**What are the nutrition guidelines?** - Proper diet & exercise can help people with diabetes lead healthy lives. Although a diabetic diet can vary person to person, monitoring daily intake of carbohydrates, protein & fat is important. In general, daily intake of Carbohydrates range from 45-60% of total calories; Protein intake 10-20% of daily calories; Fat intake <30% of daily calories; and Cholesterol should be limited to <300 mg a day.

**What does a diabetic diet consist of?** - Of all the things that you eat, carbs impact your blood sugar levels the most. Some carbs digest slowly, while others digest quickly. You should monitor the **TYPE** and **SERVING SIZE** of these foods. Foods that contain carbs include, grains (breads, crackers, rice, hot and cold cereals, tortillas, noodles); starchy vegetables (potatoes, peas, corn, beans, lentils); fruit and fruit juice; milk and yogurt; sweets and desserts.

**Meals on Wheels** – Each of our meals meet at least 1/3 of the Daily Recommended Dietary Allowance for the population we serve. For clients monitoring their sugar intake, we offer a “*diabetic-friendly*” hot meal that offers a dessert lower in carbs compared to the dessert with the regular meals. ***Although the total carbs in the meal are not listed on the menu that you receive, our Nutritionist can help you obtain that information.***

### **Recommendations:**

- Aside from your *Meals on Wheels* meal, try to consume **heart-healthy foods** for other meals and snacks each day - Focus on **whole fruits**; Eat more **non-starchy veggies**; Select **lean protein**; Eat **whole grains**; **Limit saturated fats** by cutting back on processed and fast foods, red meat & full-fat dairy. Replace red meat with beans, nuts, skinless poultry and fish, whenever possible. Switch from whole milk and full-fat dairy foods to low-fat or non-fat versions. In place of butter or margarine, use olive or canola oils that are rich in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats.
- The best way to manage your blood sugar is to **eat small, frequent meals** at about the same time every day. Start your day off right by eating a healthy breakfast. Then space meals about 4 to 5 hours apart with a healthy snack in between. Healthy snacks between meals can help keep your blood sugar at a normal level. **Never skip meals!**
- **Include a good source of fiber with every meal or snack.** Fiber from whole grains, veggies & fruits helps control blood sugar. Eat a variety of fruits & vegetables with meals & snacks every day.
- Eat a consistent amount of Carbs at each meal and snack. Start the day with some whole grains. **Hot cereals** - old-fashioned or steel-cut oats. **Cold cereals** - Look for those with **No Added Sugar** & those that list a whole grain first on the ingredient list. Use whole grain breads for lunch or snacks. Switch to whole grain pasta. Eat less potatoes and white rice & instead try brown rice or other whole grains like bulgur, wheat berries, millet, hulled barley, or quinoa.
- Include beans/legumes, which are an excellent source of slowly digested carbohydrate, as well as a great source of lean protein. Substitute beans for meat 1-2 times per week.
- **If you have a question about diabetes or the *Meals on Wheels*, contact our Nutritionist for guidance.**

Source: *Adjusting to Life with Type 2 Diabetes or Prediabetes*. 2018; [www.ahn.org](http://www.ahn.org)

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