

## First Steps in Diabetes Meal Planning

### *Shopping for food and preparing your meals*

*This handout offers tips for planning your shopping trip and for making good choices at the store.*

### Think and Plan Ahead

Planning and preparing meals is a skill. Like riding a bicycle, it may look hard at first, but it gets easier with practice.

Plan ahead before you go to the grocery store. Think about what foods will make your meals well-balanced and nutritious.

Here are some tips to help you plan your meals and shopping trip:

- Start with planning meals for only 2 or 3 days. Write a menu for each meal and gather recipes.
- Using your menu and recipes as your guide, write down the ingredients you will need.
- Before you go shopping, check your kitchen to see if you already have any of the ingredients you need for your meal plan.



*Before you go shopping, check to see if you already have any of the foods you need for your meal plan.*

### On to the Store!

Here are some tips to help you stay on track while shopping:

- Do **not** shop when you are hungry. Go to the store after eating a meal, not before. This will help you avoid impulse buys that can throw your healthful diet and budget off track.
- Shop the outside sections of the store, where fresh foods are displayed. Avoid the inner aisles, where there are usually more processed foods. This strategy may help you better control your food budget and your food choices.
- Buy only the amount of fresh foods that you will use before they spoil. These include fresh fruits and vegetables, milk and other dairy products, meat, and fish.

- If fresh fruit and vegetables are too costly, choose frozen or canned.
  - Choose vegetables without sauces and with lower salt (sodium) content, when you can find them. Most frozen vegetables do not have added salt.
  - Choose canned fruits “in juice” that have no added sugars.
- Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains should make up the largest part of your grocery list. Keep in mind that fruits and vegetables that are in season often cost less than produce that is out of season.
- Before you buy a large size of any product, ask yourself if it is the right size for your household. If a product is likely to spoil before you use all of it, you are better off buying a smaller size.
- To help maintain the quality of your food, add refrigerated and frozen foods to your shopping cart last. Keeping cold foods at cold temperatures reduces your risk of food-borne illness.

## Making Healthful Food Choices

Keep these tips in mind when shopping for healthful foods:

- **Grains and cereal products:** For the most healthful options, make sure the ingredient list or label states “100% whole grain.”
- **Protein foods:** Choose fresh or frozen fish, poultry, and lean meats. Eggs, tofu, nuts, seeds, and legumes (dry beans, lentils, and chickpeas) are also high-quality protein choices. Canned beans are a quick, easy, and low-cost way to add protein to your menu.
- **Ready-to-eat meals and foods:** Frozen and packaged foods may be high in calories, fat, sugar, and salt. Read the Nutrition Facts label.
- **Ask your dietitian:** If you have questions whether your food choices meet your individualized nutrition goals, talk with your dietitian.
- **Alternative meal planning options:** If you find the meal planning or cooking process overwhelming, you may want to use a home delivery program, personal chef services, or Meals on Wheels (for those who qualify). These services can also provide you with nutrition information for each meal. (See “Special Meal Services” on the next page.)

## Recipes Online

Visit these websites for healthful recipe ideas:

- **Allrecipes:** [www.allrecipes.com/recipes/everyday-cooking/special-diets/diabetic](http://www.allrecipes.com/recipes/everyday-cooking/special-diets/diabetic)

- **American Diabetes Association:** [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
  - Click on “*Food & Fitness*,” then click on “*Recipes*.” There is great information about meal planning under *Food & Fitness*.
- **Diabetes Self Management:** [www.diabetesselfmanagement.com](http://www.diabetesselfmanagement.com)
  - Click on “Diabetes Recipes.” You can also click on “Nutrition and Exercise,” then click on “Meal Planning.”
- **Diabetic Living:** [www.diabeticlivingonline.com](http://www.diabeticlivingonline.com)
  - Click on “Healthy Recipes.” You can also click on “Special Diets” or “Meal Plans.”
- **Diabetic Gourmet:** [www.diabeticgourmet.com](http://www.diabeticgourmet.com)
  - Click on “Diabetic Recipe Archive.”
- **Diabetic Lifestyle:** [www.diabeticlifestyle.com/recipes](http://www.diabeticlifestyle.com/recipes)
- **EatingWell:** [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)
  - Click on “Healthy Recipes.” You can also click on “Special Diets” or “Meal Plans.”
- **Taste of Home:** [www.tasteofhome.com/Recipes/Healthy-Eating/Diabetic-Recipes](http://www.tasteofhome.com/Recipes/Healthy-Eating/Diabetic-Recipes)

## Special Meal Services

Check online for services near you, or ask your dietitian or social worker for services in your area. Here are some options to try:

- **Diabetic meal delivery services:** [www.top10bestmealdelivery.com/best-diabetic-meal-delivery](http://www.top10bestmealdelivery.com/best-diabetic-meal-delivery)
- **Hire a personal chef:** Search online for “personal chef services”
- **Meals on Wheels:** [www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org](http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org)

### Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Endocrine and Diabetes Care Center: 206.598.4882

UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics: 206.520.5000

Other patients: Please call your healthcare provider:

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