

Hints for healthy cooking

Healthy eating for people with diabetes is no different from what is recommended for everyone.

There is no need to prepare separate meals or buy special foods. By choosing ingredients and recipes that are low in saturated fat and salt, high in fibre and contain less added sugar, you can make healthy and nutritious meals suitable for everyone.



Choosing healthy ingredients

When preparing meals or following recipes at home, try using some of these healthier swaps.

Fats and oils

Instead of:	Choose:
Butter	Polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats such as olive, canola or sunflower oils
Cream	Low-fat plain yoghurt, reduced fat evaporated milk, buttermilk, reduced fat ricotta, low-fat milk or cashew
Sour cream	Light cream, sour cream or low-fat plain yoghurt
Cream-based dressings	Olive oil mixed with balsamic vinegar or lemon juice
Coconut milk and cream	Reduced fat coconut milk, coconut flavoured light evaporated milk or coconut essence mixed with low-fat milk thickened with a small amount of cornflour

Dairy foods

Instead of:	Choose:
Full-fat milk	Low-fat or skim milk, calcium-fortified soy milk
Cream cheese	Reduced fat ricotta, low-fat cottage cheese or extra light cream cheeses
Hard cheese	Reduced fat cheese or small amounts of a stronger flavoured cheese (such as parmesan) or a nut based cheese
Yoghurt	Low-fat natural or diet yoghurts



Meat, chicken and fish

Instead of:	Choose:
Fatty meat	Lean cuts of meat with visible fat removed, lean mince
Poultry with skin	Skinless chicken or turkey (breast or thigh)
Sausages	Lean meat rissoles or meatballs
Deli meats	Shredded BBQ chicken, lean roast meats, turkey or chicken breast
Fried or crumbed fish	Fresh or canned fish

Breads, cereals, legumes and nuts

Instead of:	Choose:
White bread	Dense grainy or seeded bread, wholemeal sourdough or rye bread
Calrose or jasmine rice	Low glycemic index (GI) white or brown rice, basmati rice, quinoa, barley, freekeh, burghul or pearl couscous
Legumes canned in brine	Dry or no-added-salt canned legumes (such as kidney beans, chickpeas, four-bean mix, lentils)
Salted nuts	Unsalted nuts
White flour for baking	Wholemeal flour, nut flour, legume flour, or a mixture of wholemeal and white flour
Shortcrust or puff pastry	Filo pastry (brushed with egg white or milk instead of oil), reduced fat puff pastry or a base made with wholegrain bread, crushed nuts, or low GI rice

Healthy cooking methods

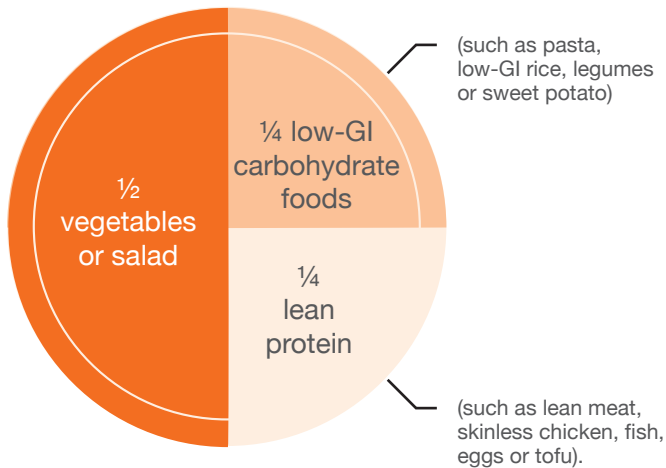
Try the following healthy cooking methods:

- » Use low-fat cooking methods, such as steaming, stir-frying, poaching, grilling, barbequing or microwaving.
- » When baking, use a non-stick pan or try using a dish lined with baking paper.
- » Use cooking spray oil or small amounts of olive, canola or sunflower oil.
- » Cook casseroles in advance, then skim the fat off with a spoon when they have cooled.
- » Roast large cuts of meat on a rack over a baking tray to drain excess fat.
- » Cook vegetables, chicken or fish in a steamer.
- » Try baking fish in the oven or on the barbeque wrapped in foil. Add lemon juice and herbs like parsley for flavour and to keep the fish moist.
- » Replace some of the meat in casseroles, stews, curries and mince dishes with legumes such as lentils, chickpeas or kidney beans.
- » When making roast vegetables or homemade chips, try partially cooking in the microwave, then brush or spray with oil and bake until crisp. Leave the skin on where possible.
- » Instead of using salt to flavour foods, try using herbs and spices such as parsley, basil, oregano and rosemary, pepper, garlic, chilli, curry, along with vinegar, lemon or lime juice.
- » Use less sugar in cakes and muffins by adding mashed, chopped or pureed fruit instead.

Don't forget you can always create healthier alternatives of your favourite take away foods such as pizza or burgers, by choosing nutritious ingredients and healthier cooking methods.

Choosing the right serving size

Serving sizes are important to help manage your diabetes and maintain a healthy weight. As a guide for main meals, aim to balance your plate like this:



The below is a general guide for lunch and dinner.

- » Fill a 1/4 of your plate with lean meat, skinless chicken, fish/seafood, tofu, legumes or eggs
- » Fill a 1/4 of your plate with a carbohydrate food that has a lower glycemic index (GI) such as pasta, low-GI rice, quinoa, barley, soba, mung bean or rice noodles, legumes, corn on the cob, low-GI potato/sweet potato
- » Fill 1/2 of your plate with salad or non-starchy vegetables and add these to every meal
- » Use small amounts of healthy fats and oils when preparing meals.

Talk to a dietitian about serving sizes that are right for you.



Tips for healthy cooking

Tips to reduce sugar

- You can use small amounts of sugar in healthy recipes.
- If a recipe contains a large amount of sugar, try reducing the amount, modifying the ingredients, or using an alternative sweetener as a substitute.
- Swapping sugar for a sweetener affects the taste and texture of cooking so, for the best results, refer to the packaging and choose one that suits your needs.

For information about artificial sweeteners read the artificial sweeteners fact sheet.

Tips to reduce salt

- Check the sodium content per 100g listed on the nutrition information panel.
- Choose products with the lowest sodium or, where possible, with less than 120mg per 100g.
- When shopping, look for products that are 'salt reduced' or have 'no added salt'.
- Avoid putting salt on the table.
- For extra flavour, add herbs, lemon juice, onions, ginger, garlic, chilli, vinegar, wine or salt-reduced stock.

The NDSS and you

A wide range of services and support is available through the NDSS to help you manage your diabetes. This includes information on diabetes management through the NDSS Helpline and website. The products, services and education programs available can help you stay on top of your diabetes.

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