

Healthy meal ideas

Planning and preparing nutritious meals is important for good health. Getting the right balance of healthy foods and choosing serving sizes to suit your needs can help you manage your diabetes and weight.

Putting together a healthy meal

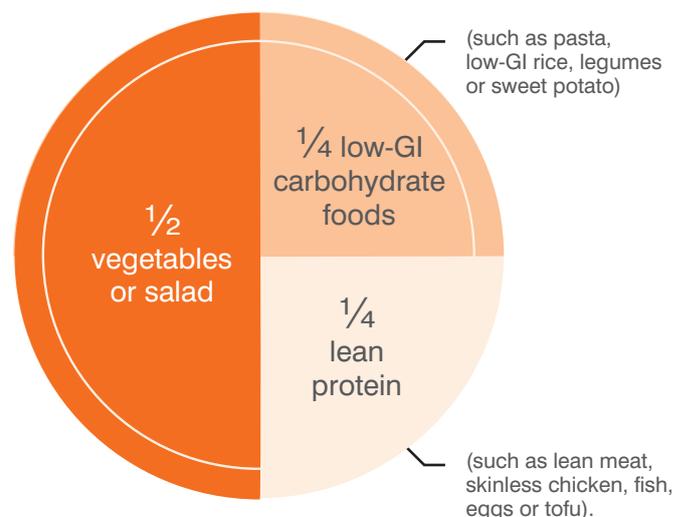
When planning what to eat on a daily basis, it's important to eat a wide variety of nutritious foods in the right amounts.



As a general guide for lunch and dinner:

- » fill half of your plate with a variety of non-starchy vegetables or salad
- » fill a quarter of your plate with a lean protein source, such as lean meat (beef, lamb, pork), skinless chicken, fish/seafood, tofu, legumes or eggs
- » fill a quarter of your plate with a carbohydrate food that has a lower glycemic index (GI) such as pasta, basmati/Doongara™ rice, quinoa, rice noodles, legumes (such as chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils) corn cob, low-GI potato/sweet potato.

Include healthy fats and oils as part of a balanced diet. These include avocado, unsalted nuts and seeds, oils such as olive, sunflower, canola, grapeseed, rice bran and polyunsaturated or monounsaturated margarines.



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The following ideas can help you plan meals that include a variety of nutritious foods. The amounts shown here are the suggested serving sizes for one person – they are a guide only and you may need to adjust them according to your own nutrition requirements. Talk to a dietitian for advice on how to cater for your individual needs and food preferences.

Breakfast ideas

- » ¾ cup cooked traditional oats with reduced-fat milk, a sprinkle of cinnamon, and sliced strawberries
- » 2 slices wholegrain raisin toast with a thin spread of poly or monounsaturated margarine
- » Smoothie made with 1 cup low-fat milk (or calcium-fortified soy milk), ½ cup low-fat vanilla yoghurt and 1 cup frozen mixed berries
- » 2 slices wholegrain toast served with 1 poached egg, grilled tomato and asparagus
- » 2 wheat cereal biscuits, served with ½ cup low-fat milk and ½ cup blueberries
- » 1 slice wholegrain toast spread with nut butter and topped with 1 small banana, sliced
- » ¼ cup untoasted muesli topped with 100g low-fat natural yoghurt, ½ cup canned fruit (drained) and 30g mixed nuts and seeds
- » 2 slices sourdough toast, served with ¼ avocado, 1 soft-boiled egg, sautéed baby spinach and mushrooms
- » ½ cup reduced-salt baked beans served on 1 slice wholegrain toast with grilled tomato
- » 1 cup fresh fruit salad topped with 100g low-fat fruit yoghurt and 30g mixed nuts and seeds.

Lunch ideas

- » ½ cup reduced-salt baked beans served on 1 slice wholegrain toast, with 1 cup green salad
- » 1 small wholegrain roll filled with 2 boiled eggs, lettuce, grated carrot, tomato and low-fat mayonnaise
- » 1 wholemeal pita pocket spread with ¼ small avocado and filled with 50g shredded BBQ chicken (skinless), 40g grated low-fat cheese, shredded lettuce, grated carrot, 1 diced tomato, capsicum and cucumber
- » Salad: ¾ cup canned lentils (drained), ½ cup low-fat fresh ricotta, ⅓ cup roasted pumpkin, ⅓ cup cooked quinoa, diced cucumber, baby spinach, fresh mint, 30g walnuts and olive oil and balsamic vinegar dressing
- » 2 slices wholegrain bread spread with ¼ avocado, 2 slices low-fat cheese, lettuce, cucumber and sliced tomato
- » Salad: ¾ cup pearl (Israeli) couscous, 100g tinned salmon, 2 cups mixed salad and lemon juice and olive oil dressing
- » 1 wholegrain reduced-salt wrap spread with low-fat fresh ricotta cheese and filled with 50g lean turkey, lettuce, tomato, grated carrot and cucumber
- » Salad: 100g tinned tuna, 1 cup cooked spiral pasta, cherry tomatoes, red onion, diced capsicum and olive oil vinaigrette
- » 1 handmade sushi roll filled with salmon, tuna or vegetables
- » Soup: 100g shredded chicken, 1 cup cooked noodles, Asian-style green vegetables made with a salt-reduced stock.

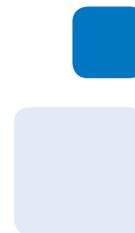
Dinner ideas

- » 100g chicken breast pan-fried with olive oil, no-added-salt tinned tomatoes, fresh herbs and spices, 1½ cups mixed vegetables served with ⅔ cup cooked pearl (Israeli) couscous
- » 100g salmon baked in the oven, served with ⅔ cup cooked quinoa, 2 cups garden salad with olive oil and vinegar dressing
- » 100g lean pork stir-fried with sesame oil, fresh herbs and spices, 1½ cups mixed vegetables and 30g unsalted cashews, served with ⅔ cup cooked low-GI brown rice
- » Homemade beef and vegetable soup served with a small grainy roll
- » 100g prawn/seafood cooked with garlic, olive oil, cherry tomatoes and garnished with parsley, served with 1 cup cooked spaghetti and 2 cups garden salad with olive oil vinaigrette
- » 100g lean steak, pan-fried with spray oil, served with 1 medium low-GI potato steamed in the jacket, 1 medium corn cob and 1½ cups steamed green vegetables with lemon juice and pepper
- » 100g lean stir-fried lamb strips served in ½ wholemeal Lebanese flat bread with sliced tomato, cucumber, onion, 1 cup tabouleh and 2 tablespoons hummus
- » ¾ cup beef chilli con carne, served with ⅔ cup cooked low-GI rice and 2 cups green salad with olive oil dressing
- » 170g tofu stir-fried with fresh herbs and spices, 1½ cups mixed Asian green vegetables and slivered almonds, served with ⅔ cup cooked low-GI rice
- » 100g lean beef bolognese sauce (made with no-added-salt tinned tomatoes, carrot, onion and garlic) served with 1 cup cooked penne pasta and 2 cups green salad with olive oil dressing.

Adding flavour to meals

There are many ways to add flavour to your dishes. Choose from a wide variety of herbs and spices, such as chilli, garlic, ginger, basil, parsley, coriander, lemongrass, mint, rosemary, oregano, cumin, paprika and pepper. Condiments – such as vinegar, lemon juice and lime juice – can also add flavour.

Using herbs, spices and condiments (such as lemon or lime juice and vinegar) can add flavour to meals.



Healthy snacks

Some people with diabetes may need to include a carbohydrate-based snack between meals. This often depends on body weight, physical activity levels and the type of medication required to manage the diabetes.

Suitable snacks may include a small glass of low-fat milk, a low-fat, natural or diet yoghurt, a serve of fresh fruit, or a wholegrain crispbread spread with ricotta cheese, peanut butter or avocado. A dietitian can advise you on whether you need to include snacks and the best choices to make.



What to drink

It's important to stay hydrated throughout the day. Water is the best drink, but alternatives include:

- » mineral or soda water flavoured with sliced lemon/lime/frozen berries/cucumber/fresh mint
- » black/oolong/green/herbal tea
- » coffee or decaffeinated coffee with skim or low-fat milk.

As an occasional substitute, diet cordial or diet soft drink may add variety without extra sugar or kilojoules.



More information

An accredited practising dietitian can help you decide on the best food choices for you. Contact the Dietitians Association of Australia on 1800 812 942 or visit www.daa.asn.au

For healthy recipe ideas, visit your Diabetes Australia state or territory website.

A dietitian can help you with healthy meals ideas and recipes suitable for the whole family.

The NDSS and you

The NDSS provides a range of services to help you manage your diabetes. These include our Infoline and website for advice on diabetes management, NDSS products and a range of support programs to help you learn more about managing your diabetes.

Published June 2016