Diabetes Placemat

Follow a low to moderate carbohydrate diet (for example, a Mediterranean/DASH-style eating pattern) for improving blood glucose, weight, cholesterol, and blood pressure.

**Carbohydrates**
Carbohydrates (starches, fruits, milk, and sweets) supply energy and have the greatest impact on blood glucose.
Starches include bread, pasta, starchy vegetables (corn, potatoes, peas, and some beans), cereal, and grains.
You should limit the amount of sweets you eat.

1/4 = Whole grains, legumes and starches

1/4 = Lean protein (such as poultry, fish, tofu, or a healthy meat substitute)

1/2 = Non-starchy vegetables

To control portions, use a 9-inch plate.

**Fiber**
Eating dietary fiber (a type of carbohydrate) is beneficial for your blood glucose and overall health.
Increase fiber slowly by adding whole grain products, skin-on fruits and vegetables, and legumes. Aim for about 25-30 grams fiber each day.
Drink 6-8 glasses of water each day. Limit beverages to sugar-free options. Limit fruit juice and sweetened drinks.
Read the Labels

Note the serving size.

**Saturated Fat and Trans Fat** = Unhealthy Fat

Lower your risk for heart disease by limiting unhealthy fats.

Recommended amount of saturated fats:
- **Women**: less than 12 grams per day
- **Men**: less than 15 grams per day

**Total Carbohydrates** = Starch + Sugar + Fiber

Look at the amount of carbohydrates by gram in one serving.

**Fiber**

Aim for foods with at least 3 grams fiber per serving.

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**Hyperglycemia**

High Blood Glucose

**Signs**

Some signs of high blood glucose include thirst, having to urinate often, hunger, dry skin or mouth, or slow healing of wounds. You may also feel tired, nauseous, or have a headache.

**Prevent High Blood Glucose**

To prevent and treat high blood glucose, take your diabetes medication correctly every day. Your provider will tell you if it is the kind you can adjust at home on your own.

- Exercising may help your blood glucose come down. Your provider can give you more information on whether and when you should exercise to lower your blood glucose. In cases of very high blood glucose, exercise may not be safe.
- Carbohydrates in foods will raise your blood glucose. If your premeal blood glucose is already high, eating fewer carbohydrates than you normally eat may help lower it.

**If you have High Blood Glucose**

If your blood glucose is higher than the target range, you may need adjustments in your medication, diet, activity level, or a combination of these. If you notice a trend of high blood glucose, you should contact your provider.

**If you are sick and have High Blood Glucose**

Illness and infection can also cause your blood glucose to become too high. This is because the stress of illness and infection make the liver put extra glucose into your blood. Other kinds of stress can also cause your blood glucose to go higher. If your blood glucose stays high due to illness, you need to contact your provider right away.

**High Blood Glucose can lead to injuries to your:**
- Eyes
- Nerves
- Heart
- Kidneys
- Feet
- Brain

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**Hypoglycemia**

Low Blood Glucose

**Signs**

Common signs and symptoms of low blood glucose include sweating, shakiness, confusion, hunger, tiredness or weakness and even headache.

**Causes of Low Blood Glucose**

Low blood glucose is caused when there is more insulin in the blood than needed to balance out the glucose. This can be the result of too much of certain diabetes medications, not enough food (such as in skipping or delaying a meal) or greater-than-normal activity. Other issues like illness or kidney problems may also cause low blood glucose.

**If you have Low Blood Glucose**

Treatment for low blood glucose is based on the "Rule of 15":

- If your blood glucose is **55mg/dl - 70mg/dl**:
  - Eat or drink **15 grams of carbohydrates** (½ cup/4 ounces of fruit juice or regular soda, 4 glucose tablets, 1 tube of glucose gel, 5 pieces hard candy or 5 jellybeans).
- If your blood glucose is **below 55mg/dl**:
  - Eat or drink double the amount, **30 grams of carbohydrates** (1 cup/8 ounces of fruit juice or regular soda, 8 glucose tablets, 2 tubes of glucose gel, 10 pieces hard candy or 10 jellybeans).

- Wait **15 minutes** and check your blood glucose again.
- Repeat the steps if your blood glucose is still less than 70 mg/dL.
- Check every 15 minutes until your blood glucose is within the goal range.

**Severe Low Blood Glucose Events**

In extreme cases of low blood glucose, it is possible to become unconscious.

- Your support persons should not try to give you anything by mouth which may cause choking.
- Use a glucagon kit if prescribed by your provider. Be sure to refill your prescription for glucagon if you do use it, to always have an emergency kit available.

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**Additional Resources**

[https://www.myplate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov)
[https://medlineplus.gov/diabetesmellitus.html](https://medlineplus.gov/diabetesmellitus.html)
[https://commissaries.com/recipes/all-recipes](https://commissaries.com/recipes/all-recipes)
[https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Healthy_Teaching_Kitchen.asp](https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Healthy_Teaching_Kitchen.asp)

For more information, see the 2023 VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus Patient Summary at [healthquality.va.gov/healthquality/guidelines/CD/diabetes](https://healthquality.va.gov/healthquality/guidelines/CD/diabetes)