

Balancing Blood Sugar With a Healthy Plate

A common question people with diabetes ask is, “What can I eat?” A very simple way to balance blood sugar is to manage portion sizes and eat a variety of foods. A great way to do this is to plan meals according to the plate method. No measuring cups or counting is necessary!

How does it work?

1. Take a 10-inch plate and divide it down the middle.
2. Fill one half of the plate with non-starchy vegetables, such as steamed zucchini, green beans, cooked cabbage, spinach, tomatoes or cauliflower.
3. Take the other side of the plate and split it in half again.
4. Make one quarter of the plate a protein food, like chicken, fish, turkey or tofu.
5. Fill the remaining quarter of the plate with a grain, such as whole grain pasta, wild rice or a wheat roll.
6. On the side, add a small to medium size serving of fruit, like an apple, orange or cup of pineapple, and a serving of low-fat dairy, such as 8 ounces of skim or 1% milk or ½ cup of low-fat cottage cheese.

Try the plate method for lunch or dinner each day for one week. Try eating a variety of fruits and vegetables. Don't worry about eating out—the plate method is totally portable. One can buy divided plates with lids to pack lunches for work. Check out www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for helpful tips for building a successful healthy plate.



TIPS FOR MAKING HEALTHY CHANGES

Change can be hard, even if you really want to improve your health. To help you successfully achieve your goals, it is important to keep a few things at top of mind.

COMMIT

Know what your goal is and make a promise to yourself to meet it.

CHOOSE A STARTING POINT

Ask yourself questions to figure out your first goal. For example, how many days are you currently active? How many sodas do you drink each day? How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?

SET REALISTIC GOALS

Start with a small goal. Ensure it's specific and measurable. For example, “I will walk for 15 minutes every day.” “I will reduce my cigarette intake to 10 cigarettes per day for two days and then reduce to eight cigarettes per day for two days.” “I will have at least one serving of vegetables with each meal.”

IDENTIFY SUPPORT SOURCES

Finding family members, friends, or coworkers for support are good options, as are support groups or professionals, such as dietitians.

TRACK YOUR PROGRESS AND UNDERSTAND ROADBLOCKS

Are you hitting your goals? If not, ask yourself how you can adjust the plan. Is your work schedule, a craving or something else getting in the way?

Don't forget to take time to celebrate your accomplishments. Change is difficult to navigate but with the right tools, and a plan in place, you can be successful.



Dealing With Diabetes Distress



Ever feel overwhelmed living with the daily tasks of managing diabetes? Coping with changing blood sugars, eating healthy, and going to doctor's appointments can lead to feelings of frustration and distress. The danger of diabetes distress can lead to "burnout" or feelings of being overwhelmed. Feeling angry, depressed, or distressed may be very common. Preventing burnout and distress involves knowing how to identify signs of depression, when to talk to a health care provider, and how to find healthy ways to cope with a diabetes diagnosis.

Signs of depression:

- Losing interest or pleasure in doing things
- Sleeping most of the day or difficulty sleeping
- Having no interest in taking care of oneself
- Avoiding talking about diabetes with loved ones
- Feeling like diabetes is too much to handle
- Feeling like one can't take care of themselves

Preventing diabetes distress:

- One to two signs of depression may be common
- Ask for the support of others to manage diabetes
- Seek medical help if several symptoms of depression are present

Tips for healthy coping:

- **Feeling alone?** Find someone to talk to such as another person with diabetes, a diabetes support group, a diabetes educator, or a behavioral health professional.
- **Feeling judged?** Have a conversation with that person and explain to them on how to help.
- **Feeling like a loved one is watching choices too closely?** Ask them to stop.

Recognize that there's no such thing as perfection. Even managing diabetes well may not lead to perfect blood sugar numbers.

Sick-Day Plan

When a person gets sick, blood sugar can be high or low—or just generally difficult to manage.

Here are questions a beneficiary can bring up with their provider:

- What should I do if I am having trouble eating?
- How should I take my medications?
- How often should someone check their blood sugar when sick?
- When should a beneficiary call a provider if sick?
- What medications can be taken relieve symptoms from illness?

Call a provider if there is:

- Keeping liquids down is difficult
- Vomiting or diarrhea longer than four hours
- Maintaining a blood glucose above 240mg/dl or below 70mg/dl
- Running a fever
- Having moderate to high ketones in urine

Sick-day checklist:

- Check blood sugar level as frequently as provider suggests for on a sick day.
- Take medications as directed.
- Call a provider if uncertain about managing diabetes while ill.



FROM THE CLINICIAN



Barb is a nurse with the disease management department that has a unique view on the program. Barb not only provides education for beneficiaries but has been diagnosed with diabetes since the age of eight. Barb reports that her job gives her such satisfaction because she is able to see improvement in the health of beneficiaries every day. Since she is able to see diabetes from both an educator and patient level, she has some tips she wants to share with all of you.

1. **Write down and ask questions as they occur.** This gives you some control at your appointment and better enables you to take care of yourself
2. **Take responsibility for understanding your diabetes, how foods affect you, how your blood sugar trends occur.** The more information you gather about yourself and the more you learn the better you are able to care for yourself.
3. **Advocate for yourself.** Through this program we educate on recommended testing. Providers work really hard to care for their patients, however, providers see many patients and sometimes things can be forgotten. By knowing about diabetes and your body you can talk with your provider and ensure that all testing is up to date.

4. **It is okay to have feelings of burnout.** These are normal feelings. It is important to talk about your feelings and if needed find a healthy outlet to aide with them. Anytime feelings of burnout occur try to think about goals that you are ready to work on and change, and also, take into consideration the long term ramifications of any action.
5. **Be honest with yourself and your providers.** By holding yourself accountable and looking at actions, change can occur. By knowing what changes you are ready and able to make, a care plan can be developed.

The role of the nurse in this program is to enable you, our beneficiaries. We educate, but also support, cheer and advocate. We relish in victories and build trust to enable us to help through your hardships. Our goal is not to control your health, but help you to control your own health. We do this through determining where you are in your health journey, what steps you are ready to take and what steps you hope to take soon. This program has allowed me to get to know people and what is important to them and allowed me to guide and support to fulfill their goals and improve or maintain their health.





CORN AND BLACK BEAN BURRITOS

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 5 minutes

Yield: 12 burritos

Serving size: 1 burrito

Ingredients:

¼ C scallions, rinsed and sliced into ¼" wide circles (including green tops)
 ¼ C celery, rinsed and finely diced
 1 ¼ C frozen yellow corn
 ½ ripe avocado, peeled and diced
 2 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
 ¼ C reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese
 ¼ C salsa or taco sauce (look for lowest sodium version)
 12 whole wheat tortillas (9")

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine scallions, celery, and corn in a small saucepan. Add just enough water to cover
3. Cover, bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium. Simmer for 5 minutes, until vegetables soften. Drain vegetables. Set aside to cool.
4. Combine avocado, cilantro, and beans in a large mixing bowl. Add cheese and salsa and mix.
5. When corn mixture has cooled slightly, add to avocado mixture.
6. In a large nonstick pan over medium heat, warm each tortilla for about 15 seconds on each side. Place each tortilla on a flat surface. Spoon 1/3 cup of the mixture into the center of the tortilla. Fold the top and bottom of the tortilla over the filling. Fold in the sides to make a closed packet.
7. Repeat with the remaining tortillas.
8. When all tortillas are wrapped, continue heating in the oven for 5 minutes, until all are warm and cheese is melted.

Nutritional information (per serving):

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----|---------------|--------|---------------|--------|
| Calories | 189 | Cholesterol | 0 g | Saturated fat | 0 g |
| Total fat | 3 g | Potassium | 204 mg | Total fiber | 3 g |
| Protein | 8 g | Carbohydrates | 34 g | Sodium | 257 mg |

Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

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Care Management Program



EAST REGION

- Toll-free phone number: **(800) 881-9227**
- Find more information at www.HumanaMilitary.com/dm

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Flu Season



Individuals with diabetes are more at risk for complications from the flu. It can also create problems with blood sugar levels.

This winter season, get a flu shot! Also, beneficiaries should speak with their providers about if they are eligible for the pneumonia vaccine.

