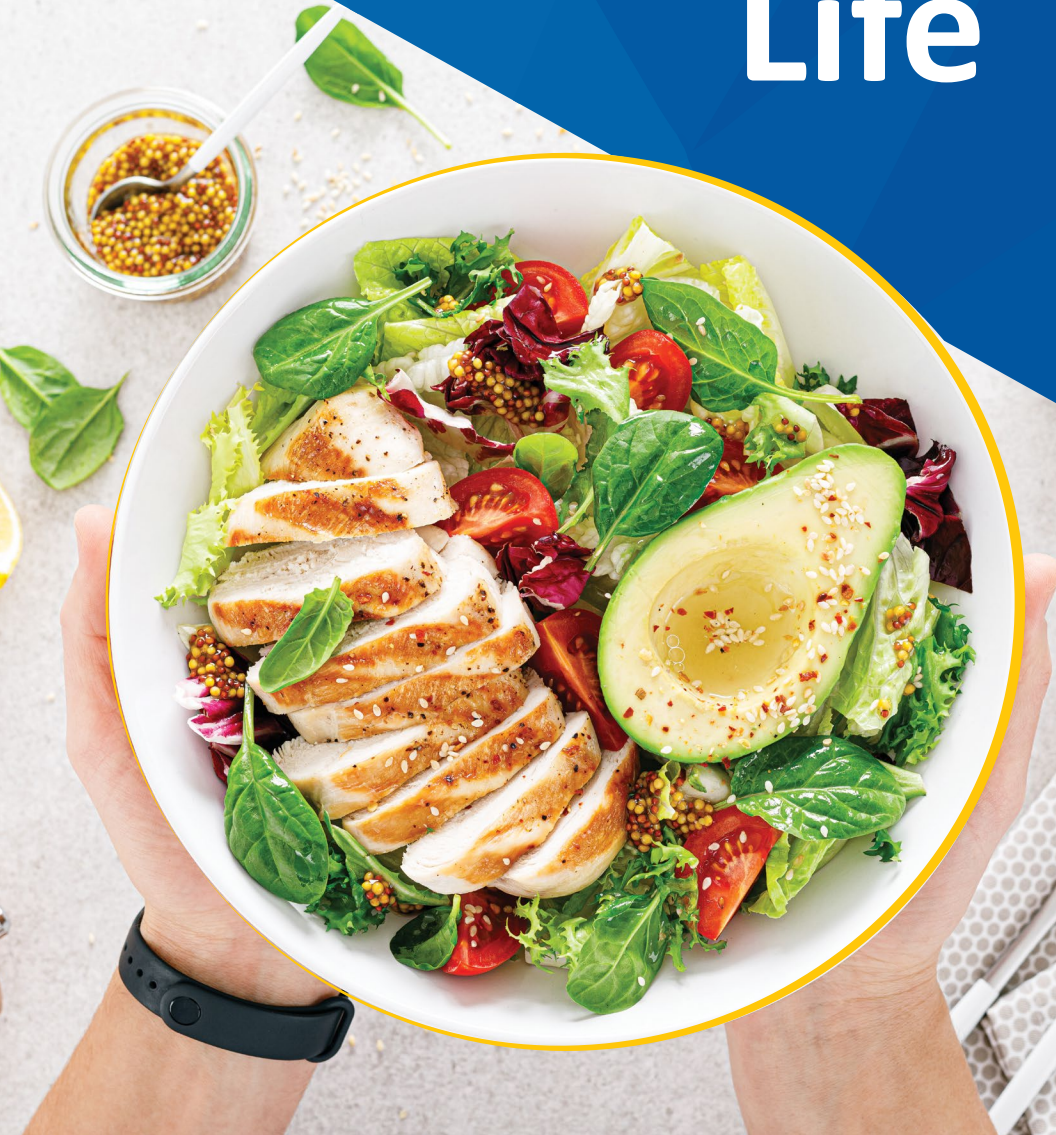




TEXAS  
Health and Human  
Services

Texas Department of State  
Health Services

# Food for Life

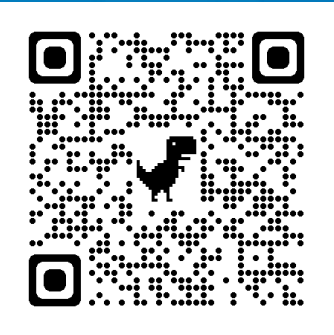


LIVING WELL WITH PREDIABETES OR DIABETES



If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes or diabetes, you can learn how to select healthier foods for better health. A healthy eating plan will help you manage your blood sugar, maintain a healthy weight, and feel better. Talk with your doctor, dietitian, or other health care provider about what a healthy eating plan looks like for you. They can help you put together a plan you can follow.

Want even more information about diabetes management?



Check out other free diabetes education materials from the Texas Department of State Health Services!

To access these education materials and more, scan this QR Code with your phone or visit [dshs.texas.gov/txdiabetes/materials/](https://dshs.texas.gov/txdiabetes/materials/)

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## You can manage your blood sugar one day at a time by:

- Eating a variety of healthy foods.
- Checking your blood sugar.
- Taking medication at the right time (if your doctor prescribes it).
- Being physically active each day.
- Losing weight if your doctor recommends it.
- Following your doctor, dietitian, or other health care provider's advice.



## How to Get Started

*What are some of your favorite foods? Let's see how you can fit them into your meal plan for managing blood sugar one day at a time.*

The good news is you don't need special foods to manage blood sugar. You can still eat most of your favorite foods, but you might have to change:

- how much you eat
- how often you eat
- when you eat

You may need to change the way you prepare your food. For instance, have you ever tried olive oil with lemon or vinegar on your salads instead of salad dressing? Or baked potatoes with salsa instead of butter, cheese, or sour cream?

**List some of the foods you like most in the box below along with a healthier choice.**

### Instead of this:

Refried beans with lard

Fried chicken

Flour tortilla

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### Try this:

Mashed pinto beans with no fat

Baked chicken

Corn tortilla

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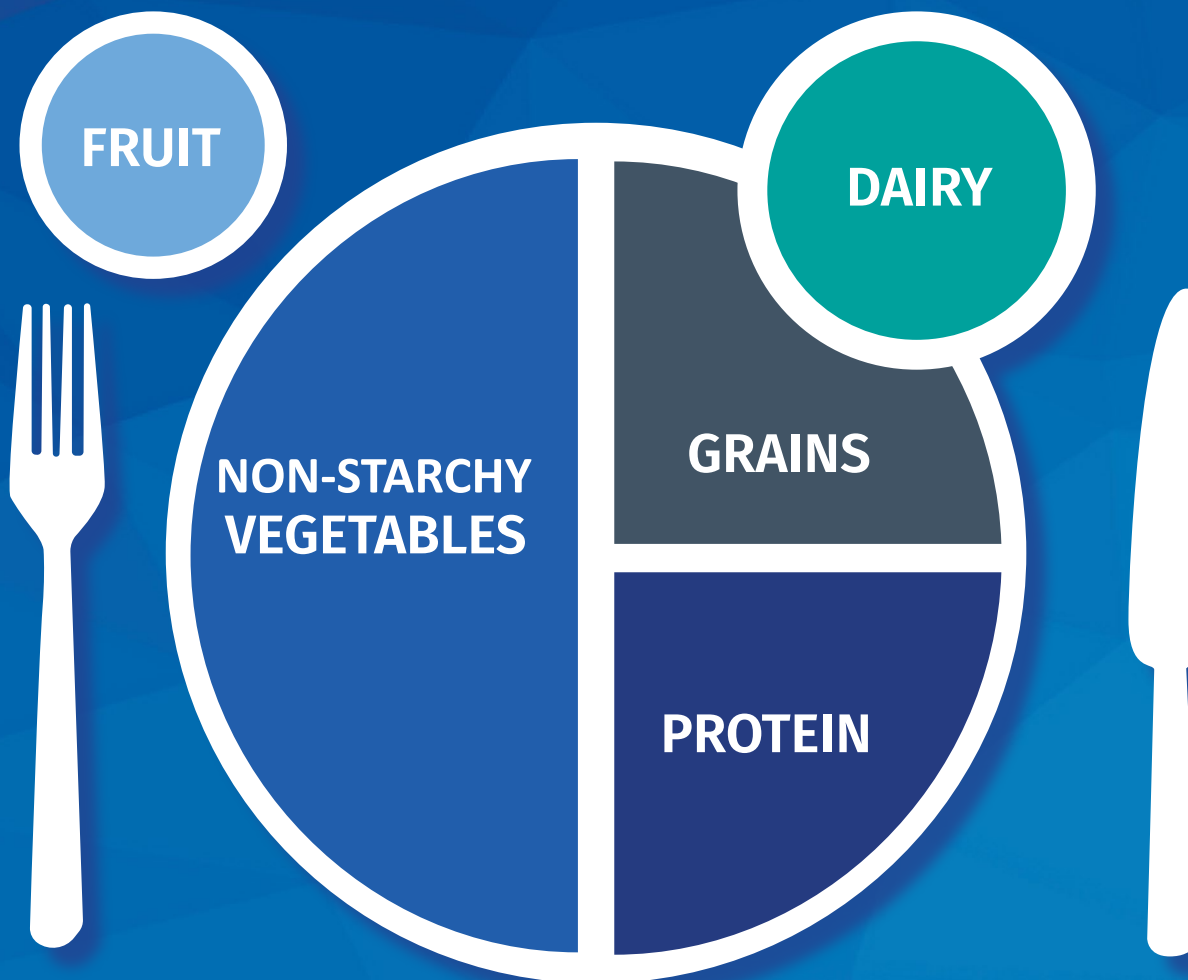
# The Healthy Plate

*The easy way to plan your meals*

Following this simple meal planning guide for what to have on your plate can make all the difference. Ask your health care provider, dietitian or go to [www.MyPlate.gov](http://www.MyPlate.gov) to find out how much of each food group is right for you.

## How much should I eat?

How much you should have of each food group depends on your height, weight, age, and physical activity level.



Adapted from MyPlate: MyPlate | U.S. Department of Agriculture, and ADA Diabetes Plate Method: What is the Diabetes Plate Method? ([diabetesfoodhub.org](http://diabetesfoodhub.org))

Make sure half of your plate has non-starchy vegetables or salad, a quarter has a serving of protein, and a quarter has a serving of breads, grains, beans, or starchy vegetables.

If you want something to drink, have water or a sugar-free, zero-calorie drink with your meal. A serving of fruit or milk/dairy can also be part of your meal, or as a great snack in between meals!

## Bread/Cereal/Grains/Beans/Starchy Vegetables



*Aim to have half of your grains be whole grains.*

**How much is a serving?** Part of eating healthy is knowing how much is in a serving. In the beginning, you'll want to measure your food with measuring cups and spoons after it is cooked. Check food packaging and labels for additional guidance on serving size.

**Each of the following equals one serving:**



1/3 cup of cooked pasta (spaghetti, noodles, vermicelli)



1 slice bread (whole wheat, white, rye, sourdough), or 1/2 English muffin



1 small baked potato



1/2 cup cooked beans (pinto, kidney garbanzo) or lentils with no added fat



1/2 hamburger bun or hot dog bun



1 cup cooked winter squash (acorn, butternut)



1/3 cup cooked white or brown rice, quinoa (all colors), couscous



1 six-inch corn, whole wheat, or flour tortilla; 1 small chapati or roti (six-inch)



1/2 cup sweet potato



1/2 cup corn, potatoes, or green peas



3/4 cup unsweetened dry cereal



1/2 cup cooked cereal (oats, oatmeal, grits)



3 cups popped popcorn (no fat)



### Food for Thought

Did you know that corn, green peas, and potatoes are starchy vegetables?

**What is a starch?** Starch is another word for carbohydrate, which is a natural part of many foods and gives our body energy. You need to eat foods with carbohydrates to stay healthy. Keep this in mind when planning your meals!

## Non-Starchy Vegetables



***Eat a variety of veggies.** Choose vegetables of all different colors.*

**Each of the following equals one serving:**



1/2 cup cooked vegetables  
(greens, carrots, broccoli,  
cauliflower, beets)



1 cup raw vegetables  
(broccoli, carrots, cucumbers,  
tomatoes, zucchini, salad greens)



1/2 cup tomato or vegetable  
juice (low-sodium or  
no salt added)



### Food for Thought

- Fresh and frozen vegetables have less salt than canned vegetables. Drain and rinse your canned veggies before cooking them to remove most of the added salt. Don't worry, they'll still taste great!
- You can get vitamin C naturally from fresh broccoli, spinach, tomatoes, and peppers.



## Fruits

***Focus on having whole fruits.** They will be more filling and have more dietary fiber.*

**Each of the following equals one serving:**



1 piece of whole fruit (a small apple, orange,  
banana, peach, or pear)



1 cup cubed or sliced fruit (melon,  
cantaloupe, papaya, mango, or pineapple)



1 cup of berries (strawberries, blue-  
berries, blackberries, raspberries)



1/4 cup of dried fruit



1/2 cup canned fruit in 100% natural  
juices or water with no sugar added



1/2 cup 100% fruit juice  
(not from concentrate)



### Food for Thought

- Whole fruits are easy to take with you as an on-the-go, low-cost snack.
- Avoid canned fruit in heavy syrup; it is loaded with sugar.

## Meat and Meat Substitutes



*Vary the types of meat or meat substitutes you eat.*

Each of the following equals a 3-ounce serving of meat.  
One 3-ounce portion is about the same size as a deck of cards or the palm of your hand:



1 small pork chop or  
1 small unbreaded fish filet



1 chicken leg, 1 small chicken thigh, or about  
1/2 a chicken breast



3 slices of sandwich or deli meat (beef,  
chicken, ham, pork, or turkey)



3 ounces lean cooked meat like beef, goat, ham,  
or lamb



3 ounces lean ground meat like beef, pork,  
or chicken

### Food for Thought

- Don't worry if there's a little fat in your meats, but too much can be a problem. Trim excess fat from meats and take the skin off chicken and turkey before cooking.
- Avoid high-fat meats like sausage, hot dogs, bologna, brisket, and spareribs.

*Don't eat meat? No problem!*

Each of the following equals a 1-ounce serving of meat substitute:



1 egg or 2 egg whites



1/4 cup (about 2 ounces) of tofu or  
1 ounce cooked tempeh



1/2 ounce of nuts or seeds  
(a small handful) or 1 tablespoon  
of nut butter



### Food for Thought

- Cooked beans (like pinto, black, kidney), lentils, and hummus are also great sources of plant-based protein.

### Try these healthy cooking alternatives:

- Bake, broil, air fry, or grill instead of frying.
- Choose low-fat meats like lean beef, turkey, chicken, and fish.
- Season your meat with herbs and spices, like rosemary, oregano, basil, cilantro, thyme, ginger, and paprika.
- Drain extra fat off ground beef, chicken, or pork before adding seasoning or sauces.

## Milk and Dairy Products



Aim to have low-fat or fat-free milk and dairy products.

Each of the following equals one serving:



1 cup (8 ounces) of low-fat or fat-free/skim milk



1 cup (8 oz) unsweetened, calcium-fortified soy milk or low-fat lactose free milk



1 cup low-fat yogurt (dairy or fortified soy)



2 cups of cottage cheese



1/3 cup of shredded cheese



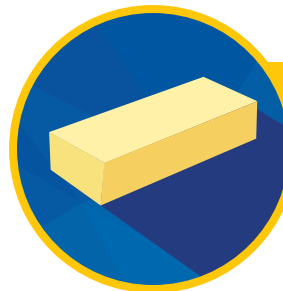
1 1/2 ounces hard cheese (cheddar, mozzarella, Swiss, Parmesan)



2 ounces of queso fresco, or 2 slices of queso blanco

### Food for Thought

Have you ever measured how large your milk glass is? Fill a one cup measuring cup (8 ounces) with water. Pour the water into your drinking glass and see how much of your glass is filled.



## Fats

Eat only a little fat every day.

Each of the following equals one serving:



1 tablespoon of vegetable oil, such as olive, canola, corn, or safflower



1 tablespoon of butter, margarine, or shortening



8 olives (black, green, kalamata) or 1/8 avocado (one small piece)



1 tablespoon of mayonnaise (low-fat), or 1 tablespoon salad dressing



1 tablespoon of cream cheese (low-fat)



### Food for Thought

- Add healthy fats to the food you eat. These heart healthy fats are found in plant-based cooking oils (like olive, canola, and avocado oil), and in foods like peanut butter and olives.
- Limit saturated and trans fats. Saturated fat is found in butter, animal lard, high-fat dairy products like whole milk and ice cream, and high-fat meats like sausage and bacon. Find out if a food has trans fats by looking at its Nutrition Facts label under Total Fat.

## How to Read a Food Label

Reading food labels can help you make healthier food choices.

- Check the list of ingredients if you have any allergies or food restrictions.
- Check the amount per serving or servings per container. Containers often carry more than one serving.



## Healthy Living Tips

Eating healthy can help you reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes or manage Type 2 diabetes.

- A diabetes meal plan isn't very different from a regular, healthy meal plan. The food you eat should fit in with what the rest of your family is eating.
- Eat a variety of foods from all food groups.
- Don't skip meals! Make time for healthy eating.
- Eat breakfast. Try to eat within one to two hours of waking up.
- Eat your meals and snacks at the same time every day. This will help keep your blood sugar in balance.
- Have fresh foods and home cooked meals more often.
- If having a dessert or sweet, try to have it with or right after a meal. Try having fresh fruit as a naturally sweet treat.
- Avoid drinks with added sugars, like regular sodas, juices, and sports drinks. Have water or sugar-free, calorie-free drinks more often.

Here are some tips for living well:

- Do at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week. Go on regular walks, work in the yard, ride a bike, swim, dance, or play with your family.
- Talk to your doctor about drinking alcohol and how your medications may be affected by alcohol. Never drink alcohol on an empty stomach.
- Aim to offer everyone the same foods and eat family meals together as often as possible.
- Make a grocery shopping list and try shopping only from that list. Don't go shopping when hungry.
- Keep a food diary for at least one week at a time. A food diary can help you pay attention to when you eat, what you eat, and how different foods make you feel. Take note of how certain foods affect your blood sugar level.
- If you eat at a restaurant and the portions are too large, ask for a to-go container.
- Stay hydrated: be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day!

# Low Blood Sugar

## What to do when your blood sugar is low:

When your blood sugar drops below normal, you may begin to feel bad. Your doctor or health care provider should explain what your blood sugar levels should be, and what is considered a low blood sugar. Your blood sugar can go down when you skip a meal, exercise more than usual, or take too much medicine, to name a few causes.

**Be prepared.** Always carry fast-acting sugars (carbohydrates), like candies, sugar or honey packets, or glucose tablets/gels with you. Depending on what other medications you are prescribed, you may also be prescribed a Glucagon Emergency Kit.

Low blood sugar can make you feel shaky, sweaty, dizzy, weak, or confused. You may also look pale, or your lips will feel numb or tingly.

## Follow the 15-15 Rule

If you are experiencing low blood sugar, you can treat it by eating or drinking 15 grams of fast-acting sugar. Then check your blood sugar after 15 minutes. Some examples of 15 grams of fast-acting sugar include any of the following:

- 1/2 cup of fruit juice or regular soda
- 1 tablespoon of sugar, honey, or corn syrup
- 6 to 7 hard candies
- 3 to 4 glucose tablets or glucose gel  
(see instructions on the packaging)

Repeat the steps of the 15-15 Rule as needed until your blood sugar is at a normal level. Once your blood sugar is raised and you start to feel better, take time to rest. If it is near your regular mealtime, eat a meal.

If you feel faint or if you are not able to eat or drink and need additional help, **call 9-1-1**. You may need to go to the hospital. Do not try to drive yourself anywhere.

Tell your doctor or health care provider about any low blood sugar levels you have. They may need to make changes to your medications.

# Food Diary

Food Group	What did you eat?	How many servings?
<b>Breakfast</b>		
Bread/Grains/Beans/Starchy Vegetables		
Non-Starchy Vegetables		
Fruit		
Milk/Dairy		
Meat/Meat Substitute		
Fat		
<b>Lunch</b>		
Bread/Grains/Beans/Starchy Vegetables		
Non-Starchy Vegetables		
Fruit		
Milk/Dairy		
Meat/Meat Substitute		
Fat		
<b>Dinner</b>		
Bread/Grains/Beans/Starchy Vegetables		
Non-Starchy Vegetables		
Fruit		
Milk/Dairy		
Meat/Meat Substitute		
Fat		



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*10-24 Food For Life Booklet  
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