

To control your diabetes

Your physician has told you that your blood glucose is too high. You can take action!



EAT HEALTHY



BE ACTIVE 30 min.
ON MOST DAYS



MAINTAIN OR REDUCE YOUR WEIGHT



DO NOT SMOKE

Find out in this leaflet how **EATING HEALTHY**, one of the “4 winning strategies”, can help you control your blood glucose level and avoid or reduce medication.

CONTROLLING YOUR DIABETES

1 Quantity

Watch **how much** you eat, particularly **foods that contain carbohydrates**.

The carbohydrate family consists of **sugars** – as in white sugar, fructose, honey, or sugar found in fruit and milk – and **starches** – found in flour, bread, potatoes and pasta.

Your goal is not to eliminate all sources of carbohydrates but rather to control their quantity.

2 Quality

Limit the foods that contain a lot of carbohydrates and fats that are bad for the health of your heart, such as cakes, pies, pastries, cookies, large muffins, chocolate, fries and chips.

By slowing down the digestion and absorption of carbohydrates, **fibre helps regulate blood sugar**. Remember to include foods that contain fibre in every meal (e.g., whole grain products, vegetables, fruit, legumes).

3 Regular meals

It is best to eat **three meals a day** in order to distribute carbohydrates evenly throughout the day and therefore better control glycemia. Meals should be taken at regular times, spaced four to six hours apart.

Snacks are especially important when you take medication or insulin to control diabetes or when your energy needs are greater, as when you do strenuous physical activity.

Sugar cubes

The “sugar cubes” (◊) method is often used to help diabetics better evaluate the amount of carbohydrates contained in foods. It makes it easier to spread out the required quantity throughout the meals and snacks of the day.

Here are general recommendations:

- 9 to 15 ◊ (45 to 75 g of carbohydrates) per meal;
- 3 ◊ (15 g of carbohydrates) for snacks, if needed.

It is always best, of course, to consult a dietitian to obtain a personalized daily meal plan.

Type of food

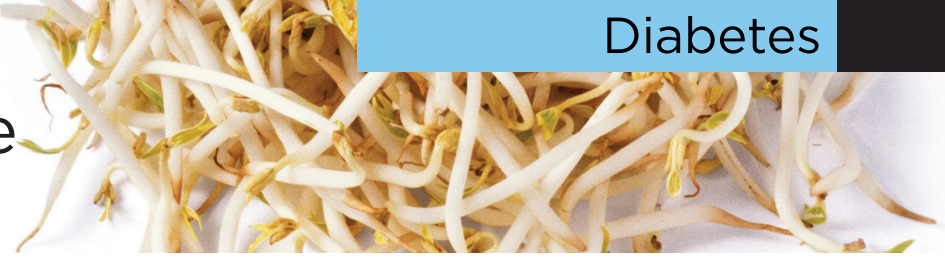
Type of food	Equivalent in sugar squares*	Amount of carbohydrates*
125 mL (1/2 cup) of cooked pasta (e.g., macaroni, spaghetti) or 75 mL (1/3 cup) of cooked rice	3 ◊	15 g
1 slice of bread or 1/2 small bagel	3 ◊	15 g
1 small potato or 125 mL (1/2 cup) of mashed potatoes	3 ◊	15 g
125 mL (1/2 cup) of corn or 250 mL (1 cup) of green peas	3 ◊	15 g
125 mL (1/2 cup) of cooked legumes (e.g., red, black or white kidney beans, lentils, chick peas)	3 ◊	15 g
1 whole fruit such as an apple, a pear or an orange	3 ◊	15 g
1/2 fruit such as a mango, a grapefruit or a banana	3 ◊	15 g
125 mL (1/2 cup) of 100% pure fruit juice, no sugar added	3 ◊	15 g
250 mL (1 cup) of milk or 175 mL (3/4 cup) of flavoured soy beverage	3 ◊	15 g
15 mL (1 tbsp.) of honey, jam or syrup	3 ◊	15 g
1 can (355 mL) of regular soft drink	8 ◊	40 g
1/8 of an apple pie	9 ◊	45 g

To find out the number of sugar cubes in a particular food, look for carbohydrates in the nutrition facts and divide the amount by five. Remember that this quantity is valid for the serving mentioned on the packaging.

* 1 square (◊) = 5 grams (g) of carbohydrates = 5 mL (1 tsp.) of sugar



Choosing the right foods



Vegetables: all you can eat, or almost!

Rich in vitamins, minerals and fibre, vegetables contain few carbohydrates. Except for potatoes, corn and green peas, you don't have to limit your consumption of vegetables. Go for a variety of vegetables and have **at least 4 servings per day**.

Fruit: perfect for snacks or dessert

Although they are as nutritious as vegetables, fruit contain more carbohydrates. Eat about **3 servings a day**, one at each meal or as a snack, for example. In addition to fresh fruit, there is also frozen fruit without added sugar, or canned fruit, once drained. As for fruit juice, don't have more than one small glass a day.

Choose whole grain products

It is usually recommended to eat them **at every meal**. Here are a few examples of good choices, best in their whole grain or multigrain versions or with bran in order to get more fibre:

- Various breads;
- Breakfast cereal with fibre and little added sugar (2 g or more of fibre and 5 g or less of sugar per 30 g serving);
- Crispbread;
- Pasta, rice, barley, quinoa, millet;
- Potatoes*, sweet potatoes*, corn* and peas*;
- Legumes*.

** Because of their carbohydrate content, these foods are considered equivalent to bread in the treatment of diabetes. They are also source of fibre.*

Don't forget milk and alternatives!

Eat **2 to 3 servings of milk products** or enriched soy beverage per day. Choose milk or yogourt with 1% or less milk fat (M.F.).

Flavoured versions of yogourt, milk or soy beverages contain a large amount of carbohydrates. To reduce the sweetness, mix them with natural yogourt, milk or soy beverage. You can also add a bit of jam, syrup or fresh fruit to plain yogourt. Other dairy desserts such as pudding, ice cream or frozen yogourt are very sweet and should only be eaten occasionally.

Cheese is considered a meat substitute since it contains few carbohydrates and is a good source of protein.

No carbohydrates in meat, but look out for fat!

You should include a **source of protein with every meal** like fish, poultry (skin removed), legumes, tofu, lean meat, eggs, cheese at 20% or less M.F., nuts or peanut butter. A small serving will balance the meal and supply the protein you need.

What about sugar substitutes?

There are different non-caloric sugar substitutes on the market that give foods a sweet taste without affecting blood sugar. There seems to be no danger to health when these products or the foods that contain them are used in moderation. Saccharine and cyclamates are not recommended for pregnant or nursing women.

Stick with the program!

Don't forget to see your physician regularly and, if you take medication, follow the instructions. If you are having problems, talk to your physician.

To have a better idea of the effect of your diet and physical activity on your glycemia; measure your blood sugar regularly and jot it down in a notepad. This information is also relevant to your physician and your dietitian who can better help you make the necessary adjustments.

What about fructose?

Fructose is the natural sugar found in fruit. Although it does not increase glycemia as much as white sugar, substituting it for sugar has not shown any advantage in controlling diabetes. When eaten in great quantities, it can increase the level of triglycerides (fat) in the blood in certain individuals.

