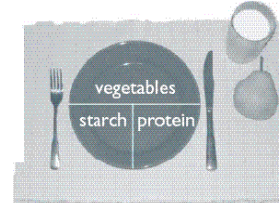


# Top 5 tips to get started



## 1| eat regular meals

Choose 3 meals/day spaced 4-6 hours apart. If your next meal is more than 5 hours away – have a snack (aim <100-150 calories, <3-5 g fat).

Snack ideas include fruit and yogurt. Night snacks should include a starch and a protein ex: 1 oz low-fat cheese and 6 soda crackers.

**why?** *Skipped or delayed meals can cause low blood sugars (if you are on certain diabetes meds) or higher blood sugars (sugar is released by your liver in effort to protect you).*

## 2| balance your plate

Aim for 3 out of 4 of the food groups on your plate (including a protein) at each meal.

Fill ½ of your plate with vegetables. ¼ with a lean protein and ¼ with starch or carbs. Or use your food label: **1 carb choice=15g**. Fibre does not raise your blood sugar. Subtract the fibre from the total carbs.

If you have a small appetite, aim for 2-3 carb choices /meal. If you have a larger appetite choose 3-4 choices/ meal. Enjoy 1 carb choice for an evening snack.

**why?** *Combining carbs with protein helps improve blood sugar control while helping with satiety and weight control.*

## 3| choose healthy carbs

Choose low Glycemic Index (GI) carb's (ex: oatmeal, All Bran™, yams, legumes) and high fibre foods more often (whole grain breads and cereals >3 g fibre/serving, brown rice, fruits (limit to 3/d) and vegetables.

Limit sugary foods like sugar, candies, regular pop, desserts, jam and honey. Limit juice to ½ cup/day. If you are thirsty, ALWAYS drink water. Replace added sugar with a sweetener such as sucralose or Splenda®

**why?** *Low GI and high fibre foods help control blood sugars, blood cholesterol and appetite.*

## 4| monitor your results

Monitor your blood sugars at least 1/day at different times. Record your results in the appropriate column in your log book (ex: pre-B or 2 hrs post L). Aim between 4-7 mmol/L before meals and 5-10 mmol/L 2 hours after eating.

**why?** *This helps you understand on a daily basis how food, activity and stress are affecting your diabetes control.*

## 5| move your body

Aim for a minimum of 30 minutes/day of an activity that you enjoy.

**why?** *In addition to improving your overall health, regular exercise can help lower your*

## take care of your heart

### 1| choose liquid over solid fats

Butter, lard, hard margarines and deep fried foods are a source of saturated and trans fat that should be limited.

### 2| go for 8-10 g of fibre/meal

### 3| go lean on protein

Limit mystery meats. Trim visible fat from meat and chicken. Try natural peanut butter, eat more dried beans and lentils and give veggie proteins a try.

### 4| eat more omega-3's

Choose fish 2x/wk. Try omega-3 eggs. Add 1-2 T of ground flax to your diet daily.

### 5| go low fat on dairy

Choose skim or 1% milk, cheese with <15% milk fat (M.F.) and yogurt with <2% M.F.

## what about alcohol?

- 1| 1-2 drinks/day is acceptable for people with diabetes.
- 2| It is **not recommended** if you have high triglycerides, high blood pressure or liver problems.
- 3| If you choose to drink alcohol remember to drink with your meal or with a snack & avoid sweet drinks.
- 4| **Alcohol can cause a low blood sugar** when taken with certain diabetes medications.

## know your numbers

People living with diabetes are also at an increased risk for complications such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, nerve damage and foot problems.

By controlling your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol, you can be sure you are doing your part to reduce this risk. Track **your** success:

Number	goal	
fasting glucose	4-7 mmol/L	<i>Ask for a copy of "My Clinic   My Diabetes" to assist you with tracking your diabetes health.</i>
A <sub>1</sub> C (3 month average)	<7.0 %	
blood pressure	<130/80	
LDL Cholesterol	<2.0	
T-Chol:HDL ratio	<4.0	

**low blood sugar:** a low blood sugar or *hypoglycemia* occurs when your blood sugar is <4 mmol/L. Diabetes pills such as Amaryl, Diamicon, Glyburide or Insulin may increase this risk.

You may feel shaky, light headed, nervous, hungry, sweaty or weak. If you have any of these symptoms:

- 1| **CHECK** your blood sugar right away.
- 2| If you are <4 mmol/L, **TREAT** the low by having 15 g of a fast acting carb (i.e. ½ cup juice or regular pop, 3 packages of sugar, 6 Lifesavers® - chew them).
- 3| Wait 15 minutes, if you are still <4 mmol/L **TREAT** again. If not, **EAT**. If your next meal is more than 1 hr away, have a snack (starch & protein) ex: 1 oz cheese

## know your team



### 1| endocrinologist (diabetes specialist)

They can help you test for possible complications including a Fasting Lipid Profile every 1-3 years, a BP check at every visit and a screening for your kidney health every year.

### 2| certified diabetes educator (CDE)

A CDE can be any health professional. This person can help explain and manage your diabetes.

### 3| dietitian

A dietitian can help you plan your meals in order to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, manage your sugar, blood fats and blood pressure in order to reduce the risk of complications.

### 4| foot care specialist (chiropract)

Foot examinations should be performed at least once a year in all people with Diabetes.

### 5| optometrist

See your eye doctor as soon as you find out you have Diabetes. A follow up should be booked in 1-2 years.

### 1| websites

Diabetes Canada | [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca) | t. (416) 363-3373  
Diabetes Care Community website | <http://www.diabetescarecommunity.ca>

### 2| books

Diabetes for Canadians for Dummies, Blumer, I.

### 3| financial assistance

Trillium Drug Plan | t. 1-800-575-5386 | Coverage available for diabetes medications and blood testing strips

## Know where to get more support