DIABETES FRIENDLY NUTRITION



SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK of MIDDLE TENNESSEE

DISCLAIMER

The content in this document is provided for educational and informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice or professional services.

The information provided should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease.

Those seeking personal medical advice should consult with a licensed physician.

Always seek the advice of your doctor or other qualified health provider regarding a medical condition.



WHAT IS DIABETES?

What is Type 2 Diabetes?

Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) occurs when a person's blood sugar levels are always high. Fasting blood sugar should be less than 100 mg/dL. People with diabetes have fasting blood sugar levels of 126 mg/dL or higher.

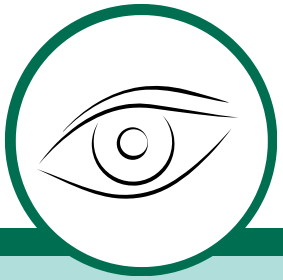
What Causes Type 2 Diabetes?

T2D is caused by insulin resistance. When insulin is released into the body, sugar (or glucose) can be used for energy or stored in the body. Insulin resistance is when the body no longer stores or uses this sugar. Instead, it allows it to stay in the blood. This causes high blood sugar levels.

Increased Thirst



Blurred Vision



Increased Hunger



How Can I Control My Blood Sugar?

There are foods we can eat to help manage T2D. **For example, foods high in fiber can help manage blood sugar levels**. Good sources of fiber include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.



References: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Diabetes Tests. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/getting-tested.html | CDC. (2019, August 12). The Insulin Resistance–Diabetes Connection. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; CDC. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/insulin-resistance.html

DIABETES AND NUTRITION

CARBOHYDRATES

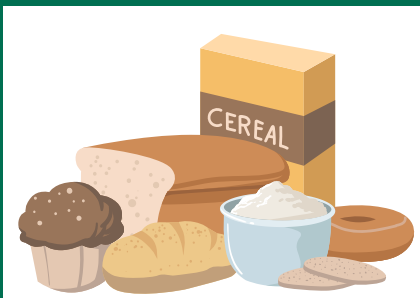
Carbohydrates, or "carbs," are the main way your body gets its energy. There are three types of carbs: starches, sugars, and fiber. Eating the right amount and the right type of carbs can help you manage your blood sugar.



FIBER

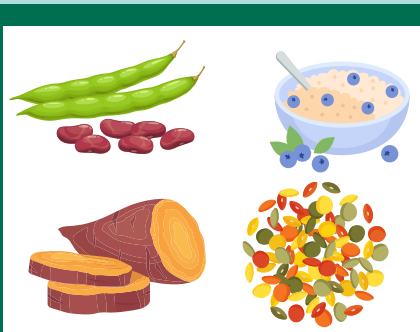
Fiber is a complex carb found in fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, and legumes.

Fiber helps maintain blood sugar levels, lower cholesterol, and helps us feel full longer.



COMPLEX CARBS

Complex carbs are digested slowly and release a steady stream of glucose into the bloodstream. They're found in foods like legumes, starchy vegetables (peas, sweet potatoes), and whole grains (brown rice, oatmeal).



SIMPLE CARBS

Simple carbs are digested quickly and send bursts of glucose into the bloodstream. They're found in both refined foods (pizza, bagels, cakes) and more nutritious foods such as fruit and milk.



Reference: American Heart Association. (2018, April 16). Carbohydrates. Www.heart.org. https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/carbohydrates

THE RIGHT PORTIONS

Portion vs Serving Size

A **portion** is the amount of food that you choose to eat at one time. A **serving** is a specific amount of food (for example, 1 slice of bread or 2 ounces of whole wheat pasta).

Portions at Restaurants

In the US, portion sizes (especially in restaurant settings) are much larger than the recommended amount.

People tend to eat more if they are served more.

Getting a handle on portion control is important for managing blood sugar.

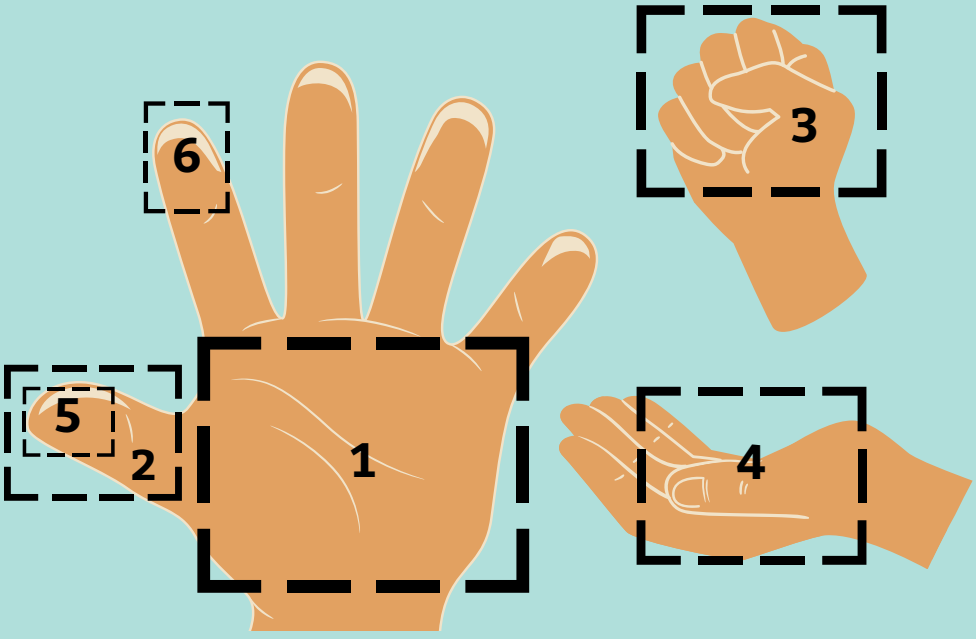


Helpful Tips

Keep serving bowls out of reach - this will reduce the temptation to return for seconds!

Ask for a to-go box! If eating out, take half of your meal home with you and enjoy it at a later time!

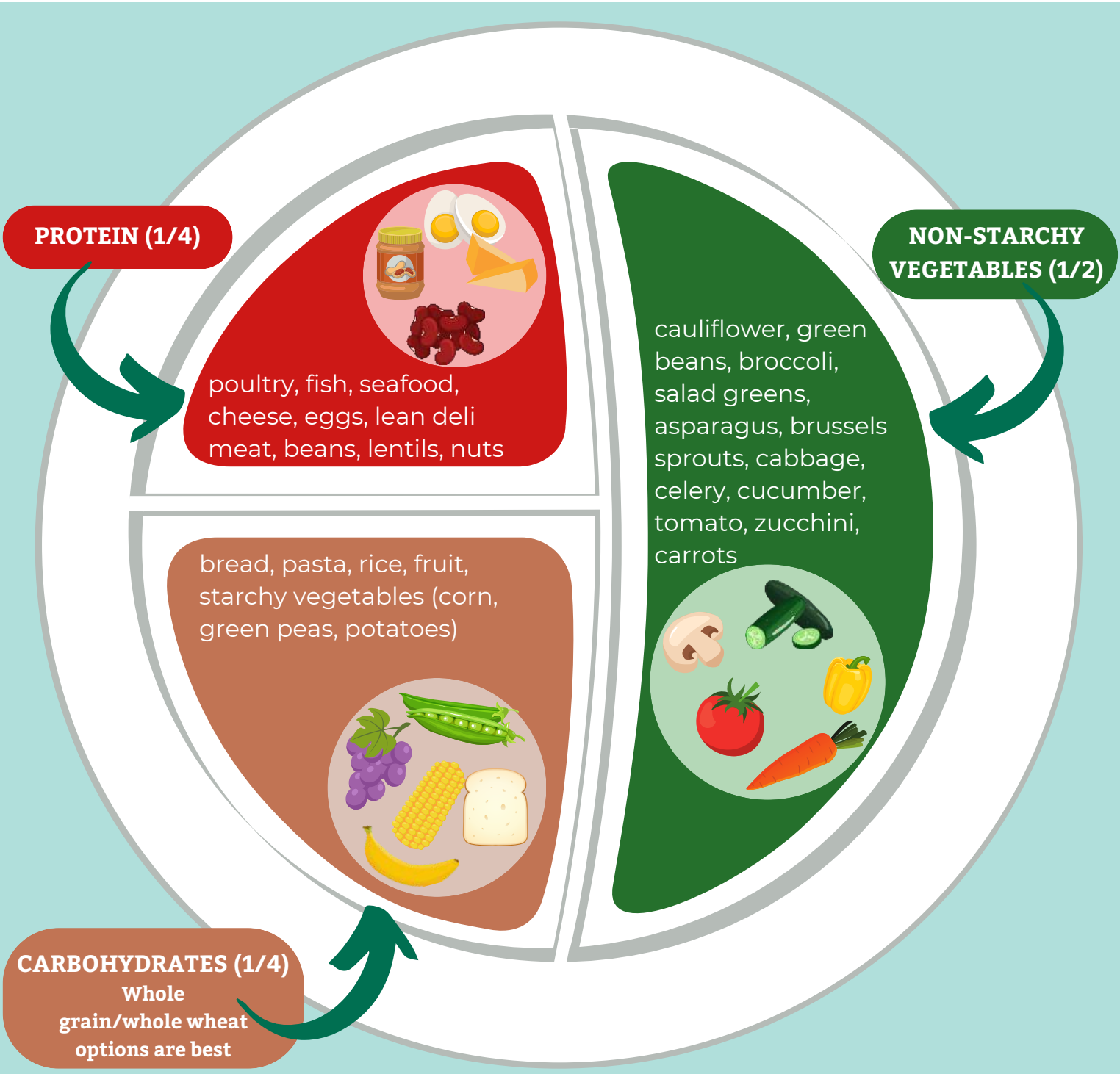
1. 3 ounces of meat, fish, or poultry (palm of hand)
2. 1 ounce of meat or cheese (thumb)
3. 1 cup or 1 medium fruit (fist)
4. 1-2 ounces of nuts (cupped hand)
5. 1 tablespoon (thumb tip)
6. 1 teaspoon (fingertip)



Reference: CDC. (2019, September 19). Diabetes Meal Planning | Eat Well with Diabetes. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/eat-well/meal-plan-method.html

MYPLATE METHOD

Carbohydrate-rich foods cause your blood sugar to spike. By following the Plate Method, you can design well-balanced meals that keep your blood sugar levels stable throughout the day.



Divide your standard 9-inch plate into 3 sections as described above. A beverage can be the fourth section of your meal - choose water or a low-calorie, non-sugar, sweetened beverage.

Reference: CDC. (2019b, September 19). Diabetes Meal Planning | Eat Well with Diabetes. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/eat-well/meal-plan-method.html

READING NUTRITION LABELS

Understanding how to read a nutrition facts label can help you better manage your blood sugar!



Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size **2/3 cup (55g)**

Amount per serving

Calories **230**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	**10%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**5%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 160mg	**7%**
Total Carbohydrate 37g	**13%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**14%**
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	**20%**
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

SERVING SIZE

This tells you the number of servings per container and the serving size. **The serving size shows the typical amount of food people eat or drink.**

CARBOHYDRATES

This tells you the amount of carbs in one serving. Speak with your health care provider to learn how many carbs you should eat each day.

DIETARY FIBER

This tells you how much fiber is in one serving. Fiber can help lower blood sugar and is found in fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and legumes.

PROTEIN

This tells you how much protein is in one serving. Diabetes friendly meals should have **protein, fiber, and carbohydrates**!

Reference: FDA. (2020). How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label. FDA. https://www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label

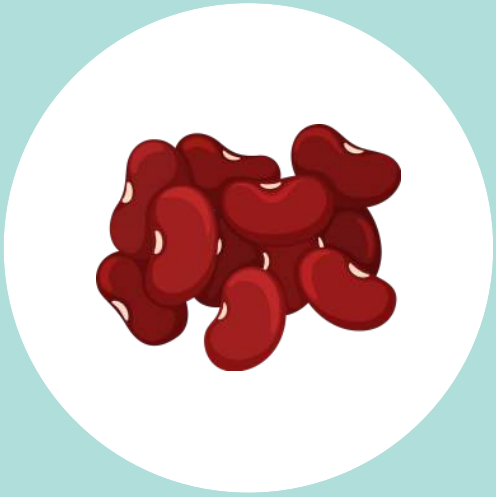
INEXPENSIVE FOODS

Balancing blood sugars does not need to be expensive. Look for these options at your food pantry and/or local convenience store.



NUTS

Roasted or fresh nuts are a good source of protein and omega-3 fatty acids. Enjoy them on their own or paired with a small serving of dried fruit!



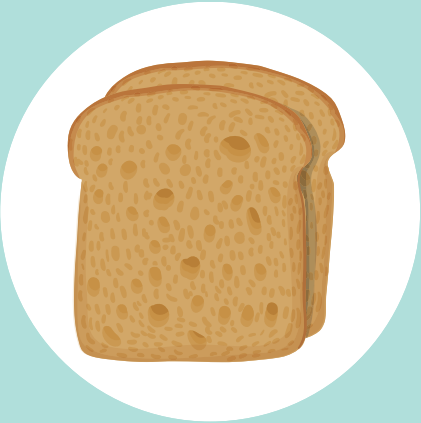
BEANS

Dried or canned beans are high in fiber, are shelf stable, and are a good source of protein. Pair them with a grain like rice and a vegetable for a balanced meal.



CANNED GREEN BEANS

Canned green beans are rich in vitamins and are a great non-starchy vegetable source. **Make sure to rinse them off** before eating to get rid of extra salt.



WHOLE GRAIN BREAD

Whole grain / whole wheat bread is high in fiber and doesn't spike your blood sugar like white bread.



BROWN RICE

Brown rice is slightly higher in fiber than white rice and is an inexpensive source of healthy carbs. Other options include quinoa, oats, and cous cous.



FROZEN BROCCOLI

Frozen vegetables have a similiar nutrient content as fresh for a fraction of the price! Frozen broccoli is high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals and can be used in many recipes.

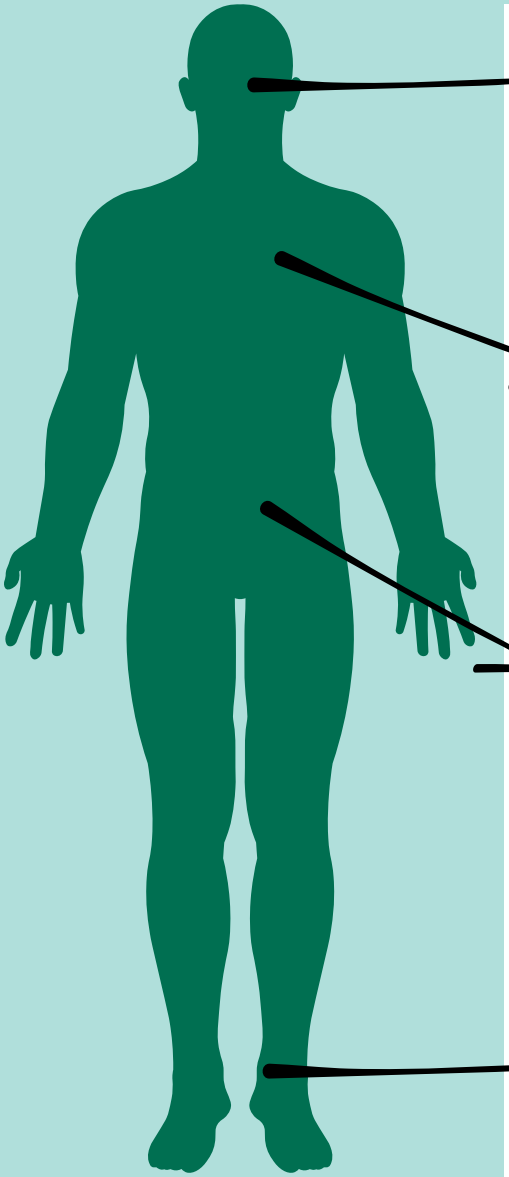


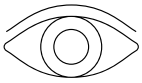
POPCORN

Microwavable popcorn is a high fiber, low calorie snack. Make sure to select a **low-salt and low-fat** option!

MANAGING DIABETES IS IMPORTANT!

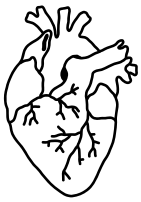
It's important to follow the recommendations of your healthcare provider when it comes to managing your T2D. When you keep your blood sugar within your target range it helps prevent or delay long-term health issues such as **heart disease, vision loss, kidney disease, and nerve damage.**





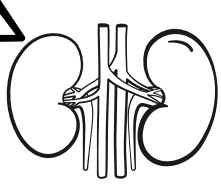
EYE HEALTH

In the long-term, T2D can damage your eyes and cause vision loss and even blindness.



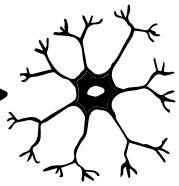
HEART HEALTH

In the long-term, high blood sugar can cause damage to your blood vessels. Those with T2D are more likely to have other medical conditions that increase the risk of heart disease (high blood pressure, increased LDL ("bad") cholesterol, and high triglycerides).



KIDNEY HEALTH

In the long-term, high blood sugar can cause damage to the blood vessels and nephrons (filters) in the kidneys. This causes the kidneys to work less efficiently.



NERVE HEALTH

In the long term, high blood sugar can cause nerve damage, which can cause numbness and difficulty/inability to do normal activities.

References: NIDDK. (2019, February 14). Managing Diabetes | NIDDK. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/managing-diabetes | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019, May 14). Heart Health Information: About Heart Disease. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/about.htm | CDC. (2021, May 7). Diabetes and Vision Loss. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/diabetes-vision-loss.html | CDC. (2021a). Diabetes and Chronic Kidney Disease. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/diabetes-kidney-disease.html. | Diabetes and Nerve Damage. (2022, June 20). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/features/diabetes-nerve-damage.html.

EXERCISE & MOVEMENT

Exercise makes your body more sensitive to insulin (an important hormone that helps cells in your body use sugar for energy) - this helps you manage your T2D. Exercise also helps keep your blood sugar in your target range.

GOAL

150 MINUTES

moderate-intensity physical activity per week



You can achieve this goal by completing just 20-25 minutes of physical activity each day!

How do I get started?

- Find something you enjoy doing
- Start small and work your way up
- Find a buddy
- Schedule exercise into your day

Examples of Moderate Intensity Activity



Brisk Walks



Housework



Lawn Mowing



Dancing

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019a). Get Active! CDC.gov. https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/active.html