

# DIABETES:

## Making the *Right* Food Choices

Are you confused about what approach to take for your own diabetes care and management?

Diabetes is a lifelong, manageable disease. Medication, exercise and your food choices have a significant impact on your blood sugar control. If you are looking for ways to manage your health, try these steps along with consultations with a dietitian and your doctor.

### ACHIEVE A HEALTHY WEIGHT

The most effective way to manage your blood sugar is to be at a healthy weight, or a healthier weight. If you are presently overweight, even a 10% reduction in weight can benefit your blood sugars and general health.

All adults, including those living with diabetes, should get at least 150 minutes of exercise per week. Exercise does not have to be structured (gym). It can be as easy as walking, swimming or taking the stairs.

The **Canadian Diabetes Association** recommends resistance exercise, or weight training, 3 times per week, in addition to physical activity. Be sure to talk to a health care provider about what is best for you.



Diabetes can be **EASILY MANAGED** with consistency & planning



## Eat your vegetables

Your mom was right! Vegetables are not only full of antioxidants (cancer fighting nutrients) and vitamins / minerals, but they are usually low in “natural sugars” and more likely to have a low Glycemic Index (GI).

Eating a diet full of low-GI vegetables will help keep your blood sugars low, help you lose weight by keeping you fuller, longer, and help you be healthier.

## Eat your fruit

Fruits are also very high in antioxidants and full of many nutrients, but may be high in “natural sugars.” Try to eat 2-3 servings per day. Fruit with a small amount of protein is a great snack. Eating a diet of low-GI whole fruit will have less of an impact on blood sugars than drinking juice. If you choose to drink a small amount of fruit juice, a ½ cup (125 mL) equals one serving of fruit.



## EASY CHICKEN STUFFED PEPPERS Serves: 8

Nutritional content per serving:

calories 240 | protein 14 g | total fat 9 g |  
carbohydrate 26 g | fibre 4 g | cholesterol 65 mg |  
sodium 90 mg | potassium 8% | calcium 4% |  
iron 10% | vitamin A 60% | vitamin C 220% |  
vitamin B12 3%

This nutritious recipe and others, including a food journal, are available at [www.chicken.ca](http://www.chicken.ca).

## EAT MORE WHOLE GRAINS

Adding more fibre to your diet will help keep your blood sugars more stable. There are 2 kinds of fibre in foods: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fibre will help lower cholesterol and can improve your heart disease risk. Insoluble fibre (the bran, bulk, and endosperm of the grain) is important in diabetes care because it is difficult to digest and adds bulk, which slows down the rate at which your food gets digested and lessens the rise in blood sugars. It also helps to prevent constipation and will make you feel fuller, longer which will help promote weight loss. Your diet should include 25 to 30 grams of fibre per day.

**BE SURE TO TAKE YOUR MEDICATION REGULARLY AND EAT CLOSE TO THE SAME TIMES EVERY DAY. TRY KEEPING A DIARY OF YOUR FOOD INTAKE AND BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS. THIS WILL HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR PATTERNS AND WILL SHOW YOU HOW DIFFERENT FOODS AFFECT YOUR BLOOD SUGARS.**

## WHAT ABOUT PROTEIN?

Protein foods are an important source of energy. They make you feel fuller and do not have much effect on blood sugars, but choose wisely. Choose leaner cuts of chicken and other meats, fish, low-fat dairy products, nuts and nut products, eggs, tofu and soy products. Beans, peas and lentils are better known for their starch content rather than their protein content. Legume-type proteins will have a slight effect on blood sugar due to their carbohydrate content, but they have a very low GI and are full of soluble fibre.

Choose low-GI foods most often!

- Whole grain & sprouted breads
- Long-grain brown rice
- Whole wheat pasta (still firm)
- Whole fruits & vegetables
- Low-fat cheese & dairy
- Oats & whole grain cereal
- Nuts, nut butters & seeds
- Beans, peas & lentils
- Barley, quinoa & spelt
- Chicken, lean meats and fish