

Meal Planning for Weight Management

You have decided to use a meal plan to help manage your health and weight. This handout includes a place to make a meal plan that describes how much food, what foods, and how often to eat. You and your dietitian will work together to create a meal plan that's right for you.



= **Tips for people with diabetes or prediabetes.**

Calories and weight

Calories are fuel (or energy) for your body. We get calories from carbohydrate, protein, and fat in the food we eat and drink.

Weight gain can happen when the calories you get from food and drinks are more than the calories your body burns.

Weight stays the same when the calories you get from food and drinks are the same as the calories your body burns.

Weight loss happens when the calories you get from food and drinks are less than the calories your body burns.

There are other things that can affect your weight and health—stress, how much sleep you get, how much activity you do, and the medicines you take.

About carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are in grains, starchy vegetables, beans, lentils, fruit, milk, yogurt, sugar, and sweet foods. See the food lists on pages 3–5.

Our bodies use carbohydrate foods for energy. Choose a variety of foods with carbohydrates every day to help you get the energy, fibre, vitamins, and minerals you need. Spread your carbohydrate foods over the day.

If you have diabetes or prediabetes, foods with carbohydrates affect your blood sugar more than other foods. Your dietitian will help you decide how much carbohydrate you need at meals and snacks.



About proteins

Protein is found in foods like meat, fish, poultry, milk, yogurt, cheese, dried cooked beans, peas, lentils, and soy products like tofu. Higher protein foods are mainly found in the Milk and Alternatives food list (page 4) and the Protein choice food list (page 6).

Protein maintains your body's tissue and muscle. It also helps your body fight infections and heal wounds. Eat higher protein foods at meals and snacks to help manage appetite and blood sugar.

About fats

Healthy fats are mainly found in fatty fish; oils like olive, canola, peanut, safflower, and walnut; nuts and seeds; avocados; and non-hydrogenated margarines.

Higher fat foods to limit are cream, regular cheese, higher fat meats, butter, fried foods, chocolate, snack foods like chips, and store-bought baked products.

Fat has more calories than protein or carbohydrates, but we need some healthy fats. Choose small portions of healthy fats. Foods higher in fat are listed on page 7.

Calories from drinks

Calories from sugary drinks and alcohol add up quickly and don't make you feel full. After having high calorie drinks, most people don't eat less at their next meal.

If you have diabetes or prediabetes, your blood sugar can rise quickly after having sugary drinks or juice.



My Meal Plan

Everyone needs a different number of calories and a different amount of carbohydrate, protein, and fat every day.

A dietitian can help you decide:

- how much food to have at each meal and snack
- what types of food to choose more often
- how often to eat

Choices: Carbohydrate, Protein, and Fat

A *carbohydrate choice* is the amount of a certain food or drink that has about 15 grams of carbohydrate.

A *protein choice* is the amount of a certain food that has about 7 grams of protein.

A *fat choice* is the amount of a certain food that has about 5 grams of fat.

Using food choices helps you:

- achieve your daily calorie goal
- know how much carbohydrate, protein, and fat you're eating at meals and snacks
- manage your blood sugar if you have prediabetes or diabetes



The food lists on the next pages tell you what 1 carbohydrate, protein, and fat choice is for many different foods.

My Meal Plan

Everyone needs a different number of calories and a different number of carbohydrate, protein, and fat choices every day. A dietitian can help you decide how many choices are right for you.

The meal plan below has space to write in the number of choices that you can eat for each of your meals and snacks. Use the food lists on the next pages to plan your meals and snacks.

Meal or Snack						
Time						
Carbohydrate choices						
Protein choices						
Fat choices						
Lower calorie vegetables						

Daily totals for My Meal Plan:

Calories: _____ Carbohydrate Choices: _____ Protein Choices: _____ Fat Choices: _____

Carbohydrate choices:

Grains and Starchy Vegetables

The lists below tell you how much food is 1 carbohydrate choice.


Each carbohydrate choice has about 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Choose whole grain and higher fibre foods more often.

Read labels and look for foods with at least 2 grams of fibre in a serving.

● Choose more often







Grains:

bagel, ¼ large or ½ small
bannock, 1½ x 2½ inches (4 x 6 cm), baked
barley or millet, ⅓ cup (75 mL) cooked
bread, 1 slice (30 grams weight)
bulgur, ½ cup (125 mL) cooked
bun, dinner, 1 (30 grams weight)
bun, hamburger or hotdog, ½
cereal, cold: bran cereals, ½ cup (125 mL)
cereal, cold: oat O's, ⅔ cup (150 mL)
cereal, hot, ¾ cup (175 mL)
chapati, roti, 1 (44 grams weight)
English muffin, ½
naan, ⅙ (10 inches or 25 cm), 30 grams weight
pasta, couscous, ½ cup (125 mL) cooked
pita bread, ½ (6 inch or 15 cm)
popcorn, low fat, 3 cups (750 mL) 
quinoa, ½ cup (125 mL) cooked
rice, ⅓ cup (75 mL) cooked
rice cakes, 2 large cakes
rye crisps, 2–3 crackers (30 grams weight)
tortilla, 1 (6 inches or 15 cm) or ½ (10 inches or 25 cm)

Starchy Vegetables:

beans, lentils, peas, ½ cup (125 mL) dried and cooked, or canned
corn, ½ cup (125 mL)
mushrooms, shiitake, 1 cup (250 mL) cooked
parsnips, ¾ cup (175 mL)
peas, green, 1 cup (250 mL)
plantain, mashed, ⅓ cup (75 mL)
potato, ½ medium (84 grams weight) boiled or baked
potatoes, ½ cup (125 mL) mashed
squash: acorn, butternut, Hubbard, ¾ cup (175 mL)
sweet potatoes or yam, ⅓ cup (75 mL) mashed
sweet potato or yam, ½ cup (125 mL) baked and cubed

▼ Choose less often

cereal, cold: granola, ¼ cup (60 mL) 
cereal, not whole grain, ½ cup (125 mL)
French fries, 10 
granola bar, oatmeal, 1 bar (28 grams weight) 
muffin, plain, ½ small (45 grams weight) 
pancake or waffle, 1 (4 inch or 10 cm)
pizza crust, ⅓ (12 inch or 30 cm)
pretzels, low fat, 7 large or 30 sticks 
soda crackers, 7 
hard taco shells, 2 (5 inch or 13 cm)

Choose less of these foods:



= Foods higher in sodium



= Foods higher in added sugar

Carbohydrate choices:

Fruit

The lists below tell you how much food is 1 carbohydrate choice.



Each carbohydrate choice has about 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Choose fresh, frozen, or canned fruit with no added sugar.

● Choose more often

apple, 1 medium	mango, ½ medium or ½ cup (125 mL)
applesauce, unsweetened, ½ cup (125 mL)	melon, 1 cup (250 mL)
banana, ½ large	nectarine, 1 large
blackberries, 2 cups (500 mL)	orange, 1 medium
blueberries, 1 cup (250 mL)	peach, 1 large
cherries, 15	pear, 1 small
fruit canned in juice, ½ cup (125 mL)	pineapple, fresh, ¾ cup (175 mL)
fruit canned in water, ¾ cup (175 mL)	plum, 2 medium
grapefruit, 1 small	pomegranate seeds, ½ cup (125 mL)
grapes, 15	raspberries, 2 cups (500 mL)
kiwi, 2 medium	strawberries, 2 cups (500 mL)
mandarin orange (tangerine), 2 medium	

▼ Choose less often

dried fruit:	fruit leather, 1 small (14 grams weight)
apricots, 8 halves	juice, unsweetened, ½ cup (125 mL)
cranberries, sweetened, 3 Tbsp (45 mL) 	tomato juice, vegetable cocktail, 1½ cups (375 mL) 
date, 1	
figs, 3	
raisins, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)	

Carbohydrate choices:

Milk and Alternatives



Make lower fat choices from this group more often. These foods and drinks are sources of protein.

● Choose more often

M.F. = Milk Fat

milk, skim or 1%, 1 cup (250 mL)	kefir, plain, 1–2%, 1 cup (250 mL)
evaporated milk, skim, canned, ½ cup (125 mL)	yogurt, less than 2% M.F., plain or no added sugar, ¾ cup (175 mL)
fortified soy beverage, plain, 1 cup (250 mL)	

▼ Choose less often

chocolate milk, 1%, ½ cup (250 mL) 	milk pudding, low fat, no added sugar, ½ cup (125 mL)
fortified soy beverage, flavoured, ½ cup (125 mL)	yogurt or soy yogurt, less than 2% M.F., flavoured, with added sugar, ⅓ cup (75 mL) 
kefir, flavoured, 1–2%, ½ cup (125 mL)	

Choose less of these foods:



= Foods higher in sodium



= Foods higher in added sugar


Carbohydrate choices:



Other



The list below tells you how much food is 1 carbohydrate choice.

Each carbohydrate choice has about 15 grams of carbohydrate.

Limit the number of other choices you eat. These foods are higher in sugar and calories, and may be higher in fat and salt.

Choose less often 

brownie or cake, no icing, 2 inch (5 cm) square	ice cream, ½ cup (125 mL)
candies, hard, 5 small	jam, jelly, marmalade, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
candies, licorice, 2 pieces	jam, syrup, no sugar added, 3 Tbsp (45 mL)
candies, jellybeans, 5 large	ketchup, 4 Tbsp (60 mL) 
cookies, arrowroot, digestive, and gingersnap, 3	potato chips, baked, 10 chips (¾ cups, 23 grams weight) 
cookies, chocolate chip, 2	sherbet, ⅓ cup (75 mL)
cookies, cream type filling, 2	soft drink, regular (varies with flavour), ½ cup (125 mL)
cranberry sauce, with added sugar, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)	sugar, syrup, molasses, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
frozen yogurt, ⅓ cup (75 mL)	
honey, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)	

Choose less of these foods:  = Foods higher in sodium  = Foods higher in added sugar

Are the lists above missing some foods that you eat often?

Ask your dietitian about how those foods can fit into your meal plan. Use the space below to write down how much of each food is 1 carbohydrate choice.

Food	How much is 1 carbohydrate choice?

Protein choices

Meat, fish, poultry, dairy products, eggs, and legumes (dried cooked beans, peas, lentils, and soy products like tofu) are higher in protein.

The lists below tell you how much food is 1 protein choice.

Each protein choice has about 7 grams of protein and is low in carbohydrate.

Protein choices that are lower in fat or have healthy fats are in the *Choose more often* group.

M.F. = Milk Fat


● Choose more often

beans, lentils, peas, dried and cooked, or canned,

½ cup (125 mL)

(See the Starchy Vegetables list, page 3.)

cheese, lower fat, less than 20% M.F., 1 oz (30 g) 

cottage cheese, fat free or 1% M.F., ¼ cup (60 mL) 

egg white, 2 whites, ¼ cup (60 mL)

eggs, 1

fish, fresh or canned, 1 oz/30 g (¼ cup/60 mL)

M.F. = Milk Fat

meat or poultry, lean, 1 oz (30 g)

meatless soy protein products (such as vegetarian ground round), 1 oz (30 g)

ricotta cheese, lower fat, less than 10% M.F., ¼ cup (60 mL)

soy beans (edamame), ⅓ cup (75 mL)

tempeh, ¼ cup (60 mL)

tofu, firm, 100 g (100 mL cubes)


tofu, soft, 150 g (150 mL cubes)

yogurt, Greek, plain, less than 2% M.F., ¼ cup (60 mL)


▼ Choose less often


Each of the higher fat protein choices below has 5–10 grams of fat, and may not have 7 grams of protein.

Each food below equals one protein and one fat choice.

cheese, more than 20% M.F., 1 oz (30 g) 

meat, ground, medium or regular fat, 1 oz (30 g)

poultry or cheese strips, breaded or seasoned, 1 oz (30 g) 

wieners, sausages, and deli or processed meat, regular fat, 1 oz (30 g) 

Choose less of these foods:  = Foods higher in sodium






Fat choices

The lists below tell you how much food is 1 fat choice.

Each fat choice has about 5 grams of fat.


Choose small amounts of the fats from the *Choose more often* group.

All fat choices are higher in calories. These foods have little or no carbohydrate.

● Choose more often	
avocado, 1/8	olives, black or green, 10 large or 15 small 
light cream cheese, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)	peanut butter, and other nut butters, 2 tsp (10 mL)
margarine, non-hydrogenated, 1 tsp (5 mL)	salad dressing, low fat, 2 Tbsp (30 mL) 
mayonnaise, light, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)	seeds, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
nuts, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)	sour cream, light, 5% or less M.F., 2 Tbsp (30 mL)
oil, 1 tsp (5 mL): canola, olive, peanut	tahini, 2 tsp (10 mL)
▼ Choose less often	
bacon, 1 slice (8 g) 	cream cheese, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
beef gravy, 2 Tbsp (30 mL) 	mayonnaise, regular, 1 tsp (5 mL)
butter, 1 tsp (5 mL)	salad dressing, regular, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
cheese, spreadable, 2 Tbsp (30 mL) 	sour cream, regular, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
cream, 10% M.F., 3 Tbsp (45 mL)	tropical oils such as palm or coconut oil, 1 tsp (5 mL)
cream, 18% M.F., 2 Tbsp (30 mL)	whipping cream, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
◆ Avoid trans fats, if possible	
Read the ingredient lists on packaged foods for:	Trans fats are also found in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils shortening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> hard or block margarines store-bought baked goods whipped topping, regular

For added fats like oils and margarine, use your thumb tip as a guide to 1 serving.



Choose less of these foods:  = Foods higher in sodium

Are the lists above missing some mixed foods that you eat often?

If so, ask your dietitian about how those foods can fit into your meal plan.

Food and serving size	How many carbohydrate, protein, or fat choices?

Foods with little or no calories, carbohydrate, protein, or fat



If you have diabetes or prediabetes, the foods listed on this page have little effect on your blood sugar.

Lower calorie vegetables

Including vegetables in meals and snacks can help lower your risk for high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.

Eat vegetables throughout the day. Cover ½ your plate with vegetables at most meals.

● Choose more often

artichoke	celery	onions
asparagus	chard	peppers
bean sprouts	cucumber	radish
beans (yellow or green)	eggplant	spinach
beets	kale	squash (pumpkin, spaghetti)
bok choy	kohlrabi	tomato, canned/stewed
broccoli, rapini	leeks	tomato sauce
Brussels sprouts	lettuce	tomatoes, fresh
cabbage, Chinese cabbage	mixed vegetables	turnips
carrots	mushrooms	zucchini
cauliflower	okra	

Extras

Extras are foods that are lower in calories and carbohydrates, protein, and fat.

The foods below are very low in carbohydrate, so they don't need to be measured.

broth , bouillon , consommé	rhubarb, with no added sugar
club soda, mineral water	sauces: chili sauce , fish sauce , soy sauce ,
coffee, tea	Worcestershire sauce , hot sauce
herbs and spices, flavouring extracts	sugar-free soft drinks, crystal drinks
horseradish	sugar-free gelatin, gum
mustard	sugar substitutes
pickle, dill	vinegar

The foods below are extras if you eat the small servings listed.

barbecue sauce, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)	sour cream, fat free, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
fruit spread, no sugar added, 2 tsp (10 mL)	steak sauce, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)
ketchup, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)	syrup, no sugar added, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
oyster sauce, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)	tomato paste, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)
relish, sweet, 1 Tbsp (15 mL)	vinaigrette salad dressing, fat free, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)
salsa, ¼ cup (60 mL)	whipped topping, low fat, 2 Tbsp (30 mL)

Choose less of these foods:



= Foods higher in sodium



= Foods higher in sugar