

# Healthy Eating with Prediabetes

## What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes is when your blood sugar (glucose) levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be called diabetes.

Insulin is made in your body. After you eat, insulin helps the sugar or glucose from food to move from your blood into your cells. This gives you energy.

When you have prediabetes, insulin doesn't work as well as it did before. This causes high blood glucose levels.

Many people with high blood glucose will get type 2 diabetes. A healthy lifestyle can delay or prevent diabetes. A healthy lifestyle includes reaching and staying at a healthy weight, eating a healthy diet that's lower in fat and sugar and higher in fibre, and being active every day.

## A healthy lifestyle to prevent diabetes

The 6 healthy lifestyle habits below can help lower your risk for diabetes.

### 1. Manage your weight

Reducing your weight by 5%–10% will lower your risk for diabetes by half. For example, a person that weighs 220 pounds (100 kg) would try to lose 11–22 pounds (5–10 kg).

Healthy weight loss is 1–2 pounds (0.5–1 kg) each week. If you would like help with weight loss, ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian.

### 2. Follow Canada's Food Guide

Canada's Food Guide has 4 food groups—Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, and Meat and Alternatives.

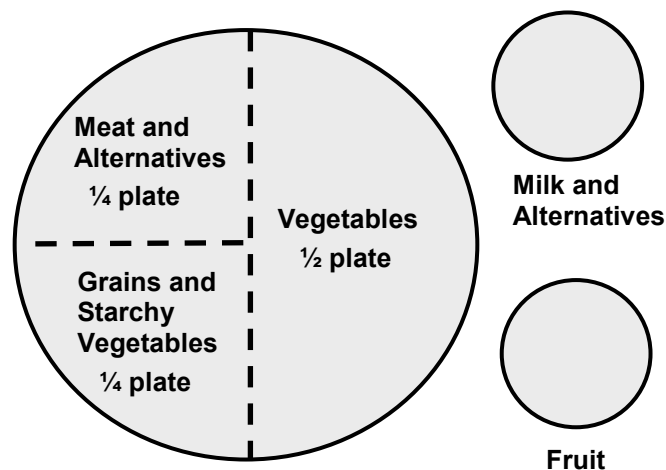
The Food Guide tells you what a serving from each food group is. Enjoy the suggested servings from each food group for your age and gender. To get a copy of the guide, visit [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide).

Eat 3 meals each day. Spreading your food over the day helps control blood glucose. Choose 3–4 food groups at each meal.

Snacks can reduce hunger between meals. Include snacks if they help you eat smaller portions at your next meal. Choose 1–2 food groups from Canada's Food Guide at each snack.

A healthy meal looks like the one below.

- Put Grain Products or starchy vegetables on  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the plate. Some starchy vegetables are potatoes, yams, corn, squash, and parsnips.
- Put Meat and Alternatives on  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the plate.
- Cover  $\frac{1}{2}$  your plate with vegetables.
- A serving of fruit is the size of a tennis ball, or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 mL).
- A serving of Milk and Alternatives is 1 cup (250 mL) of milk or  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175 mL) of plain or sugar-free yogurt.



### 3. Limit foods with added sugars

Sweet foods and added sugar in food quickly raise blood glucose. Use the tips below to reduce the amount of sugar you eat or drink.

- Drink water instead of juice or sweet drinks with added sugar.
- 100% fruit juice does not have added sugar, but has a lot of natural sugar. Limit 100% juice to ½ cup (125 mL) a day.
- Choose diet drinks in place of regular pop, iced tea, and sweet drinks.
- Limit sugar, jam, honey, desserts, candy, syrups, and sweet sauces. Instead, use low sugar or sugar-free jams, jellies, and syrups.
- Sugar substitutes can be used in coffee, tea, and baking.

### 4. Eat more fibre

Eating fibre helps you manage your blood glucose levels. Fibre slows the digestion of food and slows the movement of sugar into your blood. This helps to keep blood glucose from rising too high after a meal.

Eating more fibre may also help lower your blood cholesterol.

Read the Nutrition Facts table on food packages to find foods higher in fibre. Look for foods with the nutrition claims below:

- **Very high** source of fibre has at least **6 grams** of fibre per serving.
- **High** source of fibre has at least **4 grams** of fibre per serving.
- **Source of fibre** has at least **2 grams** of fibre per serving.

Women should try to eat 21–25 grams of fibre each day.

Men should try to eat 30–38 grams of fibre each day.

Below are more tips to choose high fibre foods. Check (☑) one tip that you want to try this week.

- Choose higher fibre and whole grain foods more often.
- Choose whole grain breads, cereals, crackers, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat couscous, quinoa, barley, bulgur, and brown rice.
- Eat high fibre cereal every day, by itself or mixed with another cereal. High fibre foods have 4 or more grams of fibre in one serving.
- Eat legumes such as peas, beans, and lentils often. Add them to soups, casseroles, salads, and spaghetti sauce.
- Choose vegetables or fruit at every meal and snack. Aim for at least 7 servings every day. One Food Guide Serving of Vegetables and Fruit is:
  - one whole vegetable or fruit
  - ½ cup (125 mL) fresh or frozen
  - 1 cup (250 mL) leafy green vegetables
  - ¼ cup (60 mL) dried fruit



## 5. Choose small amounts of healthy fat

Replace the saturated and trans fats with small amounts of healthy fats like the ones listed below.

- non-hydrogenated margarine instead of hard fats like butter, shortening, or lard
- oils: canola, olive, sunflower, and safflower
- nuts and seeds, and nut butters
- eat fish at least two times each week

### Cut down on saturated fat and trans fat

These fats aren't healthy, and may increase your risk of heart disease. Cutting back on fat may decrease your calories, and may help you to manage your weight. Use the ideas below.

#### Milk and Alternatives:

- Limit higher fat yogurt, cheese, cream, and ice cream. Choose lower fat milk products like:
  - skim or 1% milk
  - low fat yogurt
  - cheese with less than 20% milk fat (M.F.)
- Avoid lard and butter.

#### Meat and Alternatives:

- Choose lean meats: chicken, turkey, fish, lean cuts of beef, pork loin, extra lean ground poultry and beef.
- Cut the fat off meat, and take off poultry skin.
- Limit processed meat like bacon, wieners, deli meat, and sausage.
- Use less meat; replace meat with beans, peas, lentils, and tofu more often.

Sweets and snack foods: Eat less snack food like chips and chocolate bars.

#### Avoid trans fats:

- Avoid hard margarines and shortening.
- Avoid foods with hydrogenated oils and shortening in the ingredient list.
- Look for foods with little or no trans fat in the Nutrition Facts table.
- Eat less high fat baked goods like cakes, donuts, cookies.

## 6. Be active

Activity helps to lower blood glucose by using glucose for energy.



- Be active for at least 30 minutes each day, 5–7 days a week.
- Start with a few minutes a day and build up to 30 minutes.
- Aim for at least 150 minutes (2 ½ hours) a week of activities that make your heart beat faster, like brisk walking, swimming, bike riding, sports, or running. You should breathe faster but still be able to talk.
- On at least 2 days a week do activities to strengthen muscle and bone such as:
  - lifting weights
  - heavy yard work
  - yoga

### As well as being active 150 minutes a week, it's important to break up sitting time.

Sitting time is time watching TV, playing video games, using the computer at home or work, reading, and doing homework. Don't sit for more than 30 minutes at a time without moving. Below are some tips:

- Get up and stretch or move during every commercial break.
- Stand and walk around whenever you talk on the phone.
- Walk to see a co-worker instead of emailing or phoning.
- Take the long route to the bathroom at work.

If you haven't been active for a long time, talk to your doctor about your activity plans before you start.

## Examples of healthy eating days

The meal plans below show you what one day of healthy eating can look like. These are samples only; they don't replace the advice your healthcare team gives you. Choose the small meal plan if you are less active, have a small appetite, or have a big weight loss goal. Choose the large meal plan if you are active and have less weight to lose. Drink water throughout the day.

Small Meal Plan	Large Meal Plan
<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p>1 whole grain English muffin            2 egg omelet with:                1½ oz (50 g) low fat cheese                ½ cup (125 mL) onions, tomato, mushrooms</p>	<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p>1½ cups (375 mL) cooked oatmeal            2 Tbsp (30 mL) ground flax seed            Pinch of cinnamon            ½ cup (125 mL) berries            1 cup (250 mL) skim or 1% milk</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <p>1 cup (250 mL) lentil soup            3–4 whole grain crackers (30g)            1 medium orange            ½ cup (125 mL) carrots</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b></p> <p>Chicken sandwich with:                2 slices of whole grain bread                2½ oz (75 g) chicken breast, sliced                ¼ avocado, sliced                ½ cup (125 mL) lettuce                1 Tbsp mustard            ½ cup (125 mL) cucumber, sliced            1 cup (250 mL) skim or 1% milk            1 medium apple</p>
<p><b>Supper</b></p> <p>2½ oz (75 g) baked salmon            1 cup (250 mL) brown rice, cooked            1 cup (250 mL) steamed green beans            ½ cup (125 mL) sliced tomatoes            1 cup (250 mL) skim or 1% milk            1 small pear</p>	<p><b>Supper</b></p> <p>2½ oz (75 g) lean steak            1 cup (250 mL) baked yams            ½ cup (125 mL) roasted cauliflower            1 cup (250 mL) mixed greens            2 Tbsp (30 mL) sunflower seeds            1 Tbsp (15 mL) light dressing            1 cup (250 mL) skim or 1% milk            20 grapes or 1 cup (250 mL)</p>

**Snacks:** If you need help to keep portions smaller at meals, have a small snack between meals.

Smaller snacks	Larger snacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 cups (500 mL) plain popcorn with dill or Italian herbs</li> <li>• 1 cup (250 mL) carrots, celery, cucumbers and 2 Tbsp (30 mL) low fat dressing</li> <li>• ¾ cup (175 mL) sugar-free, low fat yogurt</li> <li>• 3–6 (30 g) whole grain or rye crackers</li> <li>• 1 apple, sliced, with cinnamon</li> <li>• 1 cup (250 mL) low fat milk or fortified unsweetened soy beverage</li> <li>• 1 cup (250 mL) carrots, celery, cucumbers and ¼ cup (60 mL) hummus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ cup (125 mL) low sodium cottage cheese with ½ cup (125 mL) pineapple chunks drained</li> <li>• 2–3 Wasa® or Ryvita® crackers and 1½ oz (50 g) low fat cheese</li> <li>• ¾ cup (175 mL) low fat plain Greek yogurt with ½ cup (125 mL) sliced strawberries, and ½ cup (75 mL) All Bran Buds®</li> <li>• 1 slice of whole grain toast with 1 Tbsp (15 mL) nut butter, and ½ banana sliced on top</li> <li>• 1 (30 g) high-fibre granola bar (4 grams of fibre or higher) and ¼ cup (60 mL) unsalted nuts</li> </ul>