



# LIVING WITH DIABETES

By Mohamed Shalaby, M.D.

**If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, it's important that you make the right food choices to maintain healthy blood sugar levels and overall health. Here are some tips to help!**

**#1 Choose plant-based foods over animal-based foods.** Eating a Mediterranean-style diet—high in fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and olive oil and low in red meat, poultry and animal fats—has been found to reduce the need for blood-glucose lowering medications in people with type 2 diabetes.

**#2: Go for whole grains rather than refined ones.** Refined grains—such as white flour, rice and pasta—don't offer much nutritional value and can send blood glucose soaring.

Whole grains like oat flour, brown rice and whole-wheat pasta, on the other hand, are rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

**#3: Use a healthier spread on bread.** Avoid products that contain a lot of saturated fat, like butter and cream cheese, and regular margarine, which contains trans fats. Your best substitutes are trans-fat-free margarines or those that contain plant stanols or sterols.

**#4: Get your D from dairy.** In addition to providing calcium, dairy products are a good source of vitamin D. Recent research has linked vitamin D deficiency with a greater likelihood of developing serious complications, like cardiovascular disease, if you have type 2 diabetes.

**#5: Substitute a sweet potato for a white one.** Sweet potatoes recently made the American Diabetic Association's (ADA) list of "super foods," and it's easy to see why. They have a lower glycemic index than regular potatoes, meaning they don't raise your blood glucose levels as much. They're also rich in carotenoids, which are important for eye health; the natural plant compound chlorogenic acid, which may help reduce insulin resistance; and potassium, which lowers blood pressure. 🍷

There's a difference between serving size and portion size. A serving is a standard amount of food containing a set amount of calories; a portion is what you actually put on your plate. So a portion could be a lot more than a single serving—and can contain a lot more calories than you might expect.

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