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Healthy Meal Ideas for Diabetes

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Leaflet provided by:

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This leaflet has some ideas of balanced and nutritious meals that you may find useful.

Importance of regular meals

It is important to eat regular meals when trying to manage your weight and diabetes. It may be worthwhile planning your meals for the week in advance.

At each meal try to include:

- some high fibre carbohydrate: granary/seeded bread, cereal, boiled potatoes, baked potato, sweet potato, homemade potato wedges, pasta, rice, chapatti, cous cous, yam, tortillas, noodles, crackers, crispbread
- some lean protein (e.g. fish, chicken, eggs, beans) or dairy (e.g. yogurt, cheese or milk)
- and some fruit or vegetables (why not get mixed frozen vegetables that can be quickly cooked then can be added to almost any meal?)

Be aware of your carbohydrate portion sizes; try to keep carbohydrate amounts similar at each meal day to day. This will help to manage your blood sugar levels. Your dietitian can discuss this with you.

Breakfast Ideas

- ✓ Cereal e.g. Wheat biscuit cereal, bran based cereal, fruit and fibre, shredded wheat or no added sugar muesli with skimmed/ semi skimmed/ 1% milk. Try adding a portion of chopped fresh fruit or a tablespoon of dried fruit for natural sweetness that counts towards your '5 a day'.
- ✓ Porridge made from natural rolled oats with low fat milk, try adding frozen berries or seeds or chopped plain nuts.

- ✓ Toast with a scraping of margarine/low fat spread and or marmalade/ jam/ yeast extract/peanut butter. Choose granary bread, oat based bread or seeded bread if you can.
- ✓ Toast with grilled tomatoes and mushrooms. As a treat you could add grilled lean bacon for a change.
- ✓ Baked beans or scrambled/poached/boiled egg on granary toast.
- ✓ Mixed fruit with a low fat plain yoghurt. Why not add some chopped almonds or walnuts?
- ✓ Malt loaf with a scraping of low fat olive oil based spread.
- ✓ High fibre cereal bar and a piece of fruit or glass of skimmed/semi-skimmed milk.
- ✓ High fibre breakfast biscuits with a glass of low fat milk.
- ✓ Glass of skimmed or semi skimmed milk and a banana.

Lunch Ideas

Sandwiches

Use different breads such as wholegrain, granary, seeded, pitta, chapattis, wraps and fill with:

- ✓ ham, mustard and salad
- ✓ low fat cheese spread and cucumber
- ✓ chopped boiled egg and tomato
- ✓ tuna mixed with sweetcorn
- ✓ hummus and salad
- ✓ cottage cheese and pineapple
- ✓ lean roast beef, salad and horseradish sauce
- ✓ tinned salmon and cucumber

Some sandwich fillings are moist enough to spread on bread without butter or margarine. Or use a small amount of low fat spread. Add salad to the sandwich or serve with a side salad.

Small jacket potato

Serve with salad and top with:

- ✓ baked beans
- ✓ tuna and sweetcorn
- ✓ cottage cheese (plain or flavoured) and salad
- ✓ chilli con carne

Toast toppers

- ✓ scrambled egg and mushrooms
- ✓ sardines or pilchards in tomato sauce
- ✓ low fat cheese spread and tomato
- ✓ baked beans
- ✓ poached egg and grilled tomato

Other lunch ideas

- ✓ Soup with a small wholegrain roll or seeded/granary bread. If possible go for a soup that contains pulses or meat as this will help to keep you full for longer.
- ✓ Omelette with veg (e.g. tomato, sweetcorn, onion) served with bread or new potatoes.
- ✓ Couscous salad: Make up couscous following the packet instructions. Add low fat feta cheese and your choice of salad vegetables e.g. cherry tomatoes, olives.
- ✓ Cold pasta salad with smoked salmon or tinned tuna, mackerel or pilchards with some of the following: red onion, cucumber, tomatoes, celery, pepper, tinned sweetcorn, avocado, Flavour with a low fat dressing.
- ✓ Pitta pizzas: Spread a tablespoon of tomato puree on a wholegrain pizza. Sliced some mushroom, tomato and light mozzarella cheese and lay on top of the pitta. Sprinkle with mixed herbs and bake for 10-12 minutes at gas 5. Serve with salad.
- ✓ Potato tuna salad: Mix leftover (cold) boiled new potatoes with a small can of tuna and some chopped tomato, cucumber and spring onion. Add ½ a crushed clove of garlic and a tablespoon of lemon juice and stir. Serve on a bed of lettuce.
- ✓ Oatcakes with low fat cheese spread or ham with veg sticks and a low fat plain yogurt.

Evening meal

Fill around 1/3 of your plate with carbohydrate at your evening meal. If you are trying to lose weight, aim for ¼ of your plate to be carbohydrate.



(Diabetes UK)

Evening Meal Ideas

- ✓ **Chicken pasta:** Add frozen vegetables to pasta during the last 3 minutes of cooking. Drain the water and then toss in 2 tablespoons of light salad dressing and cooked diced chicken. Serve with salad.
- ✓ **Mediterranean fish:** Buy fish fillets that can be cooked from frozen (check the label). Brush the fish lightly with olive oil and season with freshly ground pepper and other dried herbs or a teaspoon of pesto and wrap in tin foil. Bake the fish in the oven and serve with basmati rice and steamed green beans.
- ✓ **Filling salad:** Chop up vegetables and serve them over a bed of greens. Add some chicken breast, cottage cheese or another reduced-fat cheese or a small tin of salmon. Serve with wholegrain garlic bread.
- ✓ **Stir fry:** Keep a frozen vegetable stir-fry medley in your freezer. Use a spray oil to cook along with chopped meat, chicken, fish or chicken-style quorn. Serve with basmati rice or wholegrain noodles.
- ✓ **Bolognaise:** Cook lean minced beef with herbs, onion, mushroom, carrots and/or other vegetable plus tinned tomato and tomato puree, or tomato based sauce. Serve with long grain/basmati rice, pasta or jacket potato and extra vegetables/salad. Try with quorn or turkey mince for an even healthier option.
- ✓ **Chilli con carne:** Use the bolognaise recipe above and add a can of kidney beans, ½ a teaspoon of chilli powder and ½ teaspoon of cumin at the same time as the tinned tomatoes.
- ✓ **Kebabs:** alternate pieces of lean meat or fish with cherry tomatoes, onions, peppers and mushrooms, grill, bake or BBQ these for 10 minutes, turning every few minutes, and serve with a jacket potato or pitta bread. You can make the meat more tender by leaving it to soak in lemon juice in the fridge for an hour before cooking.
- ✓ **Casserole:** Fry chopped chicken, turkey, lean pork or beef in a little olive oil/spray oil and add carrots and onions. Add a reduced salt stock cube and water and cook on a low heat for 40 minutes. You can also add pulses like beans (e.g. kidney beans, butter beans or cannelloni) or lentils. If adding pulses/beans reduce the meat quantity. This also makes the dish cheaper. Serve with new potatoes, rice or pasta.
- ✓ **Pasta bake:** Boil some pasta and veg e.g. chopped carrots or broccoli. Drain the water and add in a tin of tuna and a jar of tomato pasta sauce. Sprinkle with reduced fat cheese and bake under a grill or in the oven for 5 minutes. Serve with salad.
- ✓ **Roast chicken:** Spray chicken with a low calorie spray oil before roasting and serve without the skin. To make healthier roast potatoes, boil for 10 minutes and then drain, spray with low calorie spray oil and cook in the oven for 40 minutes. Serve with plenty of veg and reduced salt gravy.
- ✓ Make **chicken noodle soup** with the leftover roast chicken: boil wholegrain noodles and fresh or frozen stir-fry veg in reduced salt veg or chicken stock. Add the roast chicken and heat for 2-3 minutes then serve with a sprinkle of reduced salt soya sauce and some black pepper.
- ✓ **Quick chicken korma:** Fry an onion and 2 chopped chicken breasts in a little oil with 2 tablespoons korma curry paste. Add tinned tomatoes and cook for 5 mins. Add 1 tablespoon of ground almonds and a small carton of natural yogurt and heat through (without boiling). Serve with basmati rice and a refreshing salad such as tomato, onion and cucumber.

What about drinks?

- We need to keep to keep our bodies topped up with enough water for good health and to help us function well, both physically and mentally. Most people need around 1½ - 2½ litres of fluids each day (around 6-8 drinks) which you should space throughout the day. There are times when you may need more than this for example in hot weather or if you are being very active and sweating a lot, or if blood sugars are very high.
- Some drinks, however, can be high in energy (calories) so if you are trying to manage your weight it is important to choose carefully.

What drinks are best avoided?

- ✗ Avoid full sugar fizzy drinks, sugary squashes and sugary flavoured water.
- ✗ Limit pure fruit juice or smoothies to 1 small glass per day.
- ✗ Try to avoid having too many high calorie drinks. Some milkshakes, hot chocolate & other “bedtime” drinks and “body building” drinks tend to be high in calories.
- ✗ All alcoholic drinks contain energy but some more than others. Try not to exceed the government recommendations of no more than 2-3 units per day for females and no more than 3-4 unites per day for males.

What are Lower Energy (calorie) Drinks?

Lower calorie drinks are better choices e.g.

- ✓ Water – tap, still or sparkling, add a slice of lemon for flavour if you wish
- ✓ Sugar Free flavoured water (check the label for sugar content) still or sparkling
- ✓ Low calorie, sugar free, or no added sugar squashes / cordials
- ✓ Soda Water
- ✓ Diet / Slimline mixers e.g. Slimline bitter lemon, Slimline Indian tonic water
- ✓ Diet fizzy drinks e.g. Diet or sugar free lemonade or Cola, Pepsi Max, Lilt zero, Sprite zero, Coca Cola zero, Diet coke, Diet Pepsi, Fanta zero, 7 up sugar free, IRN BRU sugar free, Oasis extra light (however, these drinks can damage teeth)
- ✓ Different teas e.g. camomile, green, peppermint, lemon.
- ✓ Tea or coffee without sugar and with skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed milk & sweetener if required. Why not try earl grey tea or chai tea for variety
- ✓ Cocoa made with skimmed milk and artificial sweetener
- ✓ Low calorie hot chocolate drinks e.g. Options, Cadburys highlights or supermarket own brands

Snacks

As well as your main meals, you may also need some snacks between meals. This will depend on your medication, your blood sugar levels and your energy needs (e.g. whether you are physically active). Your dietitian will discuss this with you. If you would like some healthy snack ideas, please ask your dietitian for a snack list.

Sample meal plan

Breakfast	Porridge made with skimmed milk Handful frozen berries
Mid morning	2 oatcakes Low fat cheese spread Coffee with skimmed milk
Lunch	Medium jacket potato Tuna and sweetcorn with “lighter than light” mayo Side salad Low calorie yogurt Apple/banana No added sugar squash
Mid afternoon	Mixed nuts Handful of grapes
Evening meal	Chicken and veg stir fry with wholegrain noodles Low calorie jelly No added sugar squash
Evening snack	1 small slice granary toast with low fat spread

Where to go for further recipe ideas and healthy cooking tips

Diabetes UK: www.diabetes.org.uk/Guide-to-diabetes/Recipes/

British Heart Foundation www.bhf.org.uk

Change 4 Life www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/meal-planner-recipe-finder.aspx

BBC Good Food www.bbcgoodfood.com

NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/healthy-recipes/Pages/Healthy-recipes.aspx>

Love food Hate waste www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

NHS Choices alcohol information <http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/alcohol/Pages/Alcoholhome.aspx>

If you are new to cooking or would like to improve your cookery skills, there are free cookery classes available at a variety of times and venues in the community. If you would like to take part in these classes, ask your dietitian for more information.



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

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