

MEAL PLANNING TIPS FOR SENIORS WITH DIABETES

CAREGIVERS



Diabetes Meal Planning

Planning Meals for Seniors with Diabetes: Healthy Options and Tips

Diabetes meal planning can help seniors living with the disease prevent it from getting worse while protecting their overall health.

The American Diabetes Association reports that 25.9% of Americans over the age of 65 have diabetes. Caregiving for a senior with this disease requires proactive meal planning. (diabetes.org)

Commonly known for its effects on glucose (blood sugar) levels, diabetes is a disease many seniors live with. Type II diabetes is more common among seniors. The disease is directly influenced by nutrition. As a result, caregivers and their seniors must plan meals that help keep diabetes under control. (nia.nih.gov)

Healthy Food Choices for Diabetes

Fortunately, living with Type II Diabetes doesn't mean seniors can't eat their favorite foods anymore. Diabetes can often be managed simply by making healthy choices. Portion control and consuming healthy foods like vegetables and lean meat are key.

WebMD suggests opting for:



Sugar-free foods when possible



Whole grains



Low sodium alternatives



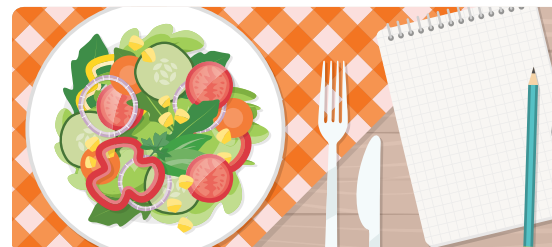
Low fat dairy



Fresh, whole foods



Minimal fried foods



A Handy Meal Planning Tool

Sign up for **My Food Advisor**, a free tool, that offers low-cost, meal planning for those living with diabetes.: <http://www.diabetes.org/mfa-recipes/meal-plans/low-cost-meals.html>.

The tool will help those with diabetes:

- Plan meals with the correct macro nutrients
- Eat healthy meals that are affordable
- Tailor meals to food preferences

Type I vs Type II Diabetes

Type I

- Primarily affects children and young adults
- Causes the body to make little or no insulin

Type II

- Common and tends to affect older adults
- Causes the body to misuse insulin
- Increases risk of heart disease, nerve damage, and other illnesses

(nia.nih.gov)

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Diabetes Meal Planning Methods (diabetes.org)



The Plate Method

One easy way to plan a healthy diabetes-friendly meal is the plate method. Select a meal that will fill one quarter of the plate with a lean protein, another quarter with a grain or starchy vegetable, and the remaining half of the plate with a non-starchy vegetable.



Carb Counting

Since carbs break down into the glucose that a person with diabetes has trouble regulating, it is best to limit carbs consumed to about 45-60 per meal. Seniors can still enjoy their favorite foods, but are able to choose the right portions with carb counting.



Glycemic Index

Often used along with the carb counting method, planning meals around the glycemic index (GI) can make dietary choices easier. Seniors with diabetes choose from foods that are low on the glycemic GI for two meals per day and may opt for just one high or medium GI food each day.

Quick Meal Planning Tips

Swap For Healthier Alternatives

If a senior loves particular ingredients or foods, plan meals with healthier alternatives. For example, swap sweet potatoes for fries or use sugar free jam instead of jelly.

Keep Meals Simple

Healthy diets rarely require much prep. When meal planning, make it a rule that you cook just one meat, one side, and one vegetable. Whenever possible, simply season it all and then grill or steam.

Develop a Routine

Once you've found favored healthy meals, plan to prepare them once a week. A routine will save you the hassle of trying to be creative all the time.



Home Care Tip:

Keep a grocery list of healthy foods on a diabetic senior's fridge. When you discover a food that isn't favored, cross it off. Within a few weeks you'll have a list of preferred diabetic options to work from.

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