



Basic Diabetes Guidelines

These are the rules to help you control your sugar and feel your best. These rules will also help you control your cholesterol to help you lower your risk of heart problems.

1. **Don't skip meals.** Be sure to eat 3 meals every day. If you do have to miss a meal, don't eat a larger meal to make up for it. Skipping meals can actually make your sugar go higher than normal. If you are using insulin you also need a healthy bedtime snack to prevent a low blood sugar overnight.
2. **Keep a healthy body weight.** Losing weight may help you control your sugar, while weight gain may make it harder to control.
3. **Exercise.** We recommend exercising daily. Exercise at least three times per week for 20-30 minutes minimum. Always talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.
4. **Whole wheat and whole grain products.** Using whole wheat and whole grain products in place of regular starches like breads and cereals can limit the increase in your blood sugars after meals. The fiber in these products can also help with cholesterol control.
5. **Limit sweets.** Limit sugar and concentrated sweets such as table sugar, brown sugar, honey, syrup, jams and jellies, pies, cakes, cookies, regular pudding, and gelatin. These foods can make your sugar climb higher and faster than most others.
6. **Sugary drinks.** Cut out high sugar drinks like regular soda, fruit drinks, sports and energy drinks. Diet or calorie-free drinks are fine (soda, flavored water or Crystal Light). Be sure to check the Nutrition Facts label to see that it contains five calories or less per serving.
7. **Sleep.** Try to get a good night sleep every night. Staying up late at night, not following a regular schedule and changing schedule frequently may make it harder to control your sugar.
8. **Lower the fat in your diet.** Diabetes increases your risk for heart disease. So eat less fat to help control cholesterol and reduce your risk, including:
 - Eat lean cuts of meat according to your diet plan.
 - Have more chicken and fish with your meals.
 - Limit red meat to two to three times per week.
 - Limit whole eggs or egg yolks to two to three times per week.
 - Trim or remove visible fat from meats before cooking.
 - Broil, bake, boil, or grill to reduce fat when cooking.
 - Choose low-fat dairy products like skim or 1% milk.
9. **Diet products.** You do not have to use diet foods just because you have diabetes. If you do use them know that some may still contain sugar. Be careful because these products can still affect your blood sugar, especially sugar alcohols (malitol, sorbitol, and xylitol), corn syrup and high-fructose corn syrup. Artificial sweeteners like Sugar Twin®, Sweet-N-Low®, Equal®, and Splenda® are all acceptable for use.