



Eat Well, Live Well

A Simple Food Guide for Type 2 Diabetes

What to Eat • What to Limit • A Simple Daily Plan

SheysUniverse

Eat Well, Live Well

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A SheysUniverse Wellness Guide

Welcome

Being told you have type 2 diabetes can feel like a lot all at once. The good news: small, steady changes to what's on your plate can make a real difference in how you feel day to day.

This guide keeps things simple. No fad diets, no impossible rules — just a clear picture of what to eat more of, what to eat less of, and how to build meals you'll actually enjoy.

This guide is for general education only and isn't a substitute for medical advice. Always work with your doctor or a registered dietitian to build a plan that fits your own health needs.

Understanding Type 2 Diabetes

In type 2 diabetes, your body doesn't use insulin as well as it should, which can let blood sugar (glucose) build up higher than is healthy. Food is one of the biggest levers you have — what and how much you eat directly affects your blood sugar.

The Big Picture

- Carbohydrates raise blood sugar the most, so portion and timing matter.
- Fiber, protein, and healthy fats help slow that rise and keep you full.
- Consistent meal timing helps your body regulate blood sugar more smoothly.
- Movement after meals (even a short walk) can help lower blood sugar spikes.

Your Daily Action Plan

- Eat balanced meals with protein, fiber, and healthy fat at every sitting.
- Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables at lunch and dinner.
- Choose whole grains over refined/white grains when you do eat carbs.
- Drink water as your main beverage — skip sugary drinks.
- Eat on a consistent schedule; try not to skip meals.
- Take a short walk after meals when you can.
- Check in with your doctor or dietitian about your personal targets.
- Get enough sleep — poor sleep can affect blood sugar control too.

Foods to Eat: Vegetables

Non-starchy vegetables are low in carbs and high in fiber — eat these freely.

- Leafy greens (spinach, kale, romaine, arugula)
- Broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts
- Bell peppers, zucchini, and summer squash
- Green beans, asparagus, and celery
- Cucumbers, tomatoes, and mushrooms
- Cabbage, carrots, and onions (in normal amounts)

Foods to Eat: Lean Proteins

Protein has little effect on blood sugar and helps you feel full longer.

- Skinless chicken and turkey
- Fish and seafood, especially salmon, tuna, and sardines
- Eggs
- Beans, lentils, and chickpeas (also count as fiber-rich carbs)
- Tofu, tempeh, and edamame
- Lean cuts of beef or pork, in moderate portions
- Unsalted nuts and seeds

Foods to Eat: Whole Grains & Fiber

When you eat carbs, choose whole, minimally processed forms with fiber intact — they raise blood sugar more slowly than refined versions.

- Steel-cut or rolled oats
- Quinoa and farro
- Brown rice and wild rice
- 100% whole wheat or whole grain bread and pasta
- Barley
- Beans, lentils, and split peas

Foods to Eat: Healthy Fats

Healthy fats support heart health, which matters extra for people managing diabetes. Keep portions modest since fats are calorie-dense.

- Olive oil and avocado oil
- Avocado
- Almonds, walnuts, and pistachios
- Chia seeds and ground flaxseed
- Fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines)

Fruits & Dairy (In Moderation)

Fruit

Whole fruit is fine in reasonable portions — pair it with protein or fat to slow the sugar hit. Favor lower-sugar, higher-fiber choices:

- Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)
- Apples and pears (with the skin)
- Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit)
- Kiwi and cherries

Dairy & Alternatives

- Plain Greek yogurt (unsweetened)
- Milk or unsweetened plant milk, in moderate amounts
- Cheese, in modest portions

Foods to Limit or Avoid

These foods tend to spike blood sugar quickly or offer little nutrition for the carbs and calories they carry. You don't have to eliminate them forever — just save them for occasional treats, not everyday staples.

- Sugary drinks: soda, sweet tea, juice, energy drinks
- Candy, pastries, cakes, and other sweets
- White bread, white rice, and other refined grains
- Fried foods
- Processed and cured meats (bacon, sausage, deli meats)
- Sweetened breakfast cereals
- Full-sugar flavored yogurts
- Alcohol, especially sweet mixed drinks — limit and check with your doctor
- Heavily processed “diet” snack foods high in refined starch

Smart Swaps

Instead of

Try

White rice

Cauliflower rice or brown rice

Soda

Sparkling water with a splash of citrus

White bread

100% whole grain or sprouted bread

Candy

A handful of berries or a few almonds

Chips

Roasted chickpeas or cucumber slices

Sweetened yogurt

Plain Greek yogurt with cinnamon

Regular pasta

Whole wheat or lentil pasta, smaller portion

Fruit juice

Whole fruit

A Sample Day of Eating

Breakfast

Scrambled eggs with spinach and peppers, a small slice of whole grain toast, and a few berries.

Lunch

Grilled chicken salad with mixed greens, cucumber, tomato, chickpeas, and an olive oil vinaigrette.

Snack

Apple slices with a small handful of almonds.

Dinner

Baked salmon, roasted broccoli, and a small portion of quinoa.

Evening

Plain Greek yogurt with cinnamon, if a snack is needed.

Reading Food Labels

The nutrition label is your best tool for making informed choices at the store.

- Check the serving size first — all other numbers are based on it.
- Look at Total Carbohydrates, not just sugar — starches count too.
- Higher Dietary Fiber is a good sign; it slows sugar absorption.
- Watch for added sugars, listed separately from natural sugars.
- Shorter ingredient lists with recognizable foods are usually better.

Many people managing diabetes track carbs per meal with guidance from their doctor or dietitian — ask your care team what target range makes sense for you.

Portion Control: The Plate Method

A simple way to build a balanced meal without counting every gram: picture your plate divided into sections.

- Half the plate: non-starchy vegetables
- One quarter: lean protein
- One quarter: whole grains or starchy vegetables
- Add a small side of fruit or dairy, and a source of healthy fat

Staying Active & Lifestyle Tips

- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week — walking counts.
- A 10-15 minute walk after meals can noticeably help blood sugar levels.
- Strength training a couple times a week helps your body use insulin better.
- Manage stress where you can — stress hormones can raise blood sugar too.
- Stay consistent with sleep; aim for 7-9 hours most nights.
- Keep up with regular check-ups and recommended lab work.

Working With Your Healthcare Team

This guide gives you a solid, general starting point — but everyone's body and health history is different. Your doctor, endocrinologist, or a registered dietitian can help you fine-tune portions, carb targets, and medication timing around your meals.

- Ask about your personal blood sugar target ranges.
- Ask if a registered dietitian or diabetes educator is available to you.
- Bring a few days of your typical meals to your next appointment.
- Track how specific foods affect your blood sugar, if your doctor recommends it.

You've Got This

*Managing type 2 diabetes is a daily practice, not a one-time fix.
Small, steady choices at each meal add up — be patient and
kind with yourself along the way.*

— SheysUniverse

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