

Choosing Healthy Foods Without a Food Label When You Have Diabetes

When you have diabetes, making healthy food choices while you grocery shop is key to keeping your blood glucose in a healthy range. The food label is a handy and useful tool to help you choose.

Shopping in the grocery store can be a bit overwhelming. But when you are choosing foods without a label, knowing how to make a healthy choice in the store is an important skill.

When you don't have the food label handy or are preparing foods without a label, try to select foods that are lower in fat and carbohydrate, and that are a healthy portion size for you.

For example, when choosing a meat product keep in mind that meat can be very lean, lean, medium fat or high fat.

Compare the nutritional values of 3-ounces of ground beef and 3-ounces of lean ground turkey. As you can see choosing lean or medium lean most times will reduce the amount of fat you eat.

When choosing foods that don't have a food label remember to look at the size of your choices.

It may be tempting to choose a large cut of meat but remember a healthy portion size is 3 to 4 ounces.

A serving size of cooked meat is about the size of the palm of your hand or a deck of cards.

Carbohydrate choices like fresh fruits and vegetables do not usually have a label. Again, look for a smaller, and non-starchy, option, like kale, green beans and zucchini.

A small pear has less total carbohydrate than a large pear, so it won't raise your blood glucose as much.

Learn to eyeball fruits and vegetables to keep your servings healthy. A serving size of non-starchy vegetables is about the size of your fist. And a serving of starches or fruit is about half a fist or what you could put in your cupped hand.

Many mobile apps and websites can also be helpful when making healthy choices in the grocery store or when making your grocery list at home.

For example, CalorieKing or MyFitnessPal can be used to find the nutritional values of many of the foods you're shopping for. Talk to your diabetes care team about using an app to help you with your grocery shopping.

Once you get the hang of choosing foods without a food label your new skills will become a habit. Just remember to choose foods low in fat, and carbohydrate and to choose healthy portion sizes for you. That way you can be confident that you are filling up on delicious and nutritious foods while taking the steps you need to healthy diabetes management.