

Fill Your Shopping Cart with Fruits and Vegetables

When you have diabetes, making choices in the grocery store can be confusing. Especially when choosing carbohydrates.

You can't go wrong by filling your cart with fruits and vegetables.

Both fruits and vegetables are healthy carbohydrate choices because they are a good source of vitamins and minerals.

Most people today don't eat enough fruits and vegetables. In fact, it's recommended that you get 2 ½ to 3 cups of non-starchy vegetables each day and depending on your carbohydrate needs 1 ½ to 2 cups of fruit.

Fruits and vegetables are also a good source of fiber.

Fiber is not converted to blood glucose by the body, so when you eat a food containing large amounts of fiber it won't raise your blood glucose as high as you might expect. That's why you should try replacing lower fiber carbohydrates with high fiber carbohydrates.

"I try to eat a lot more vegetables now-- your less starchy vegetables. So I kind of avoid the potatoes. If I am going to have a potato, I tend to have sweet potatoes, rather than that."

"If I have the munchies I'm like, "Ooh, let me go in and get me some grapes," or, "Let me--" you know, and Clementines. They may started out for the little babies, but they're great for... Great for a pick-me-up. You know, apples, whatever you really like."

Tomatoes, cucumbers, corn, lettuce, spinach, onions, carrots...vegetables.

While eating vegetables is a healthy choice, get into the habit of trying a different vegetable every now and then. Vary your veggies to get a wide variety of the different nutrients your body needs to stay healthy.

Try dark green vegetables like spinach, broccoli and collard greens; orange veggies like peppers, carrots and sweet potatoes; legumes which include black beans and split peas; starchy vegetables like corn, or sweet potatoes; and others like cauliflower, cabbage and mushrooms.

Be aware that starchy vegetables like corn, peas, potatoes, and beans have more carbohydrate in them than the green leafy choices, like kale and broccoli.

So, at mealtime try to have half of your plate as non-starchy vegetables and one quarter of your plate as starchy vegetables.

Strawberries, kiwis, grapes, bananas, apples, oranges...fruits.

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Fruits can be canned, frozen, dried or juiced.

And just like your vegetables, focus on a variety of fruits each week. Eat from all the colors of the rainbow. Yellow, green, blue, red and orange.

When choosing fruits and vegetables, remember they still contain carbohydrates so look at the size of your fresh choices.

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

"The thing that you have to be careful of is the serving size..."

And pay special attention to the serving size so you know how much carbohydrate you are getting.

A baked potato is the size of a computer mouse. Choose only enough raspberries to fit in your cupped hand.

If fresh foods are not in season, or are too expensive, opt for frozen fruits and vegetables. Most have the same nutrients and will keep longer. Avoid fruit packed with sugar to add sweetness or vegetables covered in a cheese or cream sauce.

To get the fruits and vegetables you need each day, try cutting up vegetables ahead of time and snacking on them throughout the day.

Try a side salad with a meal. Or choose canned fruit. Just be careful of juices and fruit packed in syrup. They may be adding more sugar than you need. When in doubt, fresh fruit is always the better choice.

The next time you're at the grocery store or preparing a meal or snack, don't forget to include fruits and vegetables. They are a healthy carbohydrate choice when trying to manage your diabetes. And you'll find a wide variety out there to fill your cart and your plate.