

# Prediabetes: Choosing Healthy Foods

When your goal is to manage prediabetes, choosing healthy foods every day is a step in the right direction. Making healthy food choices can help you reach and maintain a healthy weight, which is key when trying to reduce insulin resistance and manage prediabetes.

Together with your healthcare provider, take a look at what you eat each day and learn how to choose foods that are healthier for you. Most foods contain one or more of these three nutrients: carbohydrates, protein and fat. Your body needs a healthy balance of each.

Carbohydrates are found in a wide variety of foods such as: breads, cereals, pastas and whole grains; fruits, vegetables and beans; dairy products; candy and desserts. Carbohydrates are not off limits in prediabetes. In fact, they are your number one source for energy. If you don't eat enough carbohydrates, your body will burn protein instead, taking away valuable muscle building blocks.

But choose wisely because not all carbs are the same. Some carbohydrate foods are processed with white flour or are high in refined sugar and should only be enjoyed in small amounts because they offer little or no nutritional value and can raise your blood glucose. Instead, try high fiber carbohydrates like whole-wheat pasta or brown rice. Look for cereals made from whole grains. These fiber-rich foods tend to fill you up quicker and make you feel full longer, helping you to eat less. Beans are a great example of a slow-burning carbohydrate, plus they have protein as well.

Fruits and vegetables are also healthy carbohydrate choices. In fact, it's recommended that you get at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Fruits and vegetables give your body the fresh, whole nutrients your body needs for energy and overall health.

Protein is another healthy way your body can get energy and protein helps your body heal and repair itself. Healthy choices for protein include: lean meats, fish, nuts, eggs and soy. When it comes to including fats in your choices, remember, all fats are high in calories which, when using too much, can cause you to gain weight. And remember, extra weight can increase insulin resistance. But not all fats are the same.

Some fats, called monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are better for you and can actually help lower your risk of heart disease. These fats are liquid at room temperature. Add a few nuts or seeds to the foods you choose to get the benefit of good fat. Use olive oil or canola oil to prepare your foods. Talk with your healthcare provider or a dietitian to find out which fats are best for you.

At the same time, reduce the amount of bad fats you eat. They're called saturated fats and trans fats. One way to do this is to choose lean meats like chicken breast and seafood; and bake, broil or grill what you usually fry.

When choosing healthy carbohydrates, protein, and fat, there are a wide variety of foods to pick from. Don't limit yourself. Try new, healthy foods to get the variety of nutrients your body and your taste buds crave. Your healthcare provider or dietitian may have tasty suggestions and recipes you can try to help you get variety.

Making healthy food choices each day can help you lose weight, reduce insulin resistance and manage prediabetes. Start today. Make your next food choice a healthy one!