Learn how to make healthy food choices. You now know that improving your nutrition is one way you can manage your diabetes risk. By modifying your diet in beneficial ways, like choosing healthy carbohydrates and making sure you eat enough protein and fiber, it is possible to manage, or reduce your risk, for diabetes.

**Carbohydrates**

When creating a healthy diet plan to manage diabetes risk, aim to have a proper balance of foods that help keep blood sugar levels steady. Eating to reduce your risk of diabetes—and for overall good health—rests on a proper balance of complex carbohydrates and proteins and limiting refined or processed simple carbs and fat.

What are carbohydrates?

Carbohydrates ("carbs") are the primary food-based source of energy for our bodies and are a crucial part of a healthy diet. There are two main types of carbohydrates, and each affects how quickly blood glucose rises. It's important to choose the healthiest balance of carbs.

**Healthy ("complex") carbohydrates:**

- Generally contain plenty of fiber. The fiber prevents food from being absorbed too quickly and spiking blood sugar levels. Complex carbohydrates are also packed with nutrients. Examples include: Whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and beans.

- Healthy carbs should take up ¾ of your plate at meals. The largest space should be devoted to vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.

**Less healthy ("simple") carbohydrates:**

- Generally break down quickly in the body. Simple carbohydrates include sugars naturally occurring in foods such as milk and milk products, as well as processed foods that have had fiber removed, and refined foods with added sugars. Refined or processed simple carbs generally contain fewer nutrients and add the most calories.

- Should be a limited part of your diet. Wherever possible, reduce processed or refined simple carbs, including white bread, white rice and sugar.

**Read labels carefully when choosing grains!**

Whenever possible, choose products made from whole grains, which supply you with beneficial fiber and nutrients. Not all grain-based products such as breads, crackers or cereals are made with whole grains. Read labels carefully. The words “whole wheat,” “brown rice” or whole oats should be listed as the first ingredient. Those labeled “multi-grain,” “100% wheat,” or “high fiber” may not necessarily be made with whole grains and may be processed to remove the fiber. These processed grains are less nutritious than whole grains.

**Fiber**

What is fiber?

Dietary fiber is found in many plant-based foods and provides important health benefits, including helping to reduce cholesterol, prevent constipation, and maintain healthy blood sugar levels.

Here are some other benefits of fiber:

- Eating fiber-rich foods slows the absorption of glucose, helping to keep blood levels steady.
- Consuming a diet high in soluble fiber (the type found in oats, apples, nuts, flaxseed, and dried beans) may help reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.
- A high-fiber diet can help you feel full longer, reducing your intake of calories and the potential to gain weight.

How much fiber should I eat?

Women need a minimum of 25 grams and men need 38 grams of fiber a day.

Tip: Whenever possible, don’t peel your fruit or veggies. Much of the fiber content is found in the skin on apples, potatoes, pears, grapes, and other fruits and veggies.
Proteins

What are proteins?
Proteins are the building blocks of muscles. Low-fat, protein-rich foods are an important part of a balanced diet.

Include high-protein foods in your meals. Examples include: Animal-based foods such as meat, fish and dairy products, and plant-based foods such as nuts, soy, and beans.

How much protein should I eat?
Women should consume about 46 grams, and men need 56 grams, of protein per day.

Now that you have completed Lesson 1, please proceed to the next lesson.

Source: