

Healthy meal ideas

Nutritious meals are important for good health. The right balance of healthy foods can help you manage your diabetes and weight effectively.

Preparing a healthy meal

When planning what to eat, it's important to eat a wide variety of nutritious foods in the right amounts.

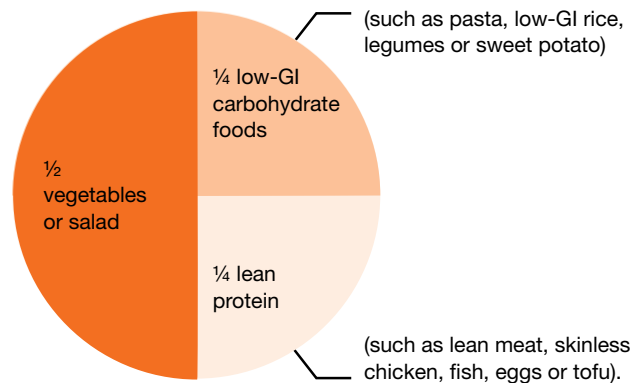
As a general guide for lunch and dinner:

- » Fill half of a standard dinner plate (25 cm) with a variety of non-starchy vegetables or salad.



- » Fill a quarter of your plate with a lean protein source, such as lean meat (such as beef, lamb and pork), skinless poultry (such as chicken and turkey), fish or seafood, tofu, tempeh or eggs.
- » Fill a quarter of your plate (about the size of your fist) with a nutritious carbohydrate food that has a low glycemic index (GI) such as wholegrain or legume pasta, basmati, brown or Doongara™ rice, quinoa, barley, freekeh, rice, soba or mung bean noodles, legumes, corn, low-GI potato or sweet potato. Read The glycemic index NDSS fact sheet for more information about GI.

Include some healthy fats and oils as part of a balanced diet. These include avocado, unsalted nuts and seeds, and oils such as olive oil.



Healthy meal ideas

The following ideas can help you plan meals that include a variety of nutritious foods. The amounts shown here are the suggested serving sizes for one adult. They are a guide only, and you may need to adjust them according to your own nutritional requirements. Talk to a dietitian for advice on how to cater for your individual needs and food preferences.

Breakfast ideas

- Smoothie made with 1 cup low-fat milk (or calcium-fortified soy milk), ½ cup low-fat natural yoghurt and 1 cup frozen mixed berries
- 2 slices wholegrain toast served with 1 poached egg, grilled tomato and asparagus
- 2 wheat cereal biscuits, served with ½ cup low-fat milk and ½ cup blueberries
- 1 slice wholegrain toast spread with natural nut butter and topped with 1 small banana, sliced
- 150-200g low-fat plain yoghurt topped with ¼ cup untoasted muesli and, ½ cup berries
- 2 small slices wholegrain sourdough toast, served with ¼ avocado, 1 soft-boiled egg, sautéed baby spinach and mushrooms
- Half a cup reduced-salt baked beans served on 1 slice wholegrain toast with grilled tomato
- 1 cup fresh fruit salad topped with 100g low-fat natural yoghurt and 30g mixed nuts and seeds

Lunch ideas

- Half a cup reduced-salt baked beans served on 1 slice wholegrain toast, with 1 cup green salad
- 1 small wholegrain roll filled with 2 boiled eggs mashed with natural yoghurt and chives, lettuce, grated carrot and tomato
- 1 wholemeal pita pocket spread with ¼ small avocado and filled with 50g shredded BBQ chicken (skinless), shredded lettuce, grated carrot, 1 diced tomato, capsicum and cucumber
- Salad: ¾ cup canned lentils (drained), ½ cup low-fat fresh ricotta, ⅓ cup roasted pumpkin, ⅓ cup cooked quinoa, diced cucumber, baby spinach, fresh mint, 30g walnuts, and olive oil and balsamic vinegar dressing
- 2 slices wholegrain bread spread with ¼ avocado, 2 slices low-fat cheese, lettuce, cucumber and sliced tomato
- Salad: ¾ cup pearl barley, 100g tinned salmon, 2 cups mixed salad and lemon juice and olive oil dressing
- 1 wholegrain reduced-salt wrap spread with hummus and filled with 2-3 falafel, lettuce, tomato, grated carrot and cucumber
- Salad: 100g tinned tuna, 1 cup cooked spiral pasta, cherry tomatoes, red onion, diced capsicum, and olive oil vinaigrette
- 1 black or brown rice sushi roll filled with salmon, tuna or vegetables, and a serve of edamame beans
- Soup: 100g shredded chicken, 1 cup cooked noodles, Asian-style green vegetables made with a salt-reduced stock

Dinner ideas

- 100g chicken breast pan-fried with olive oil, no-added-salt tinned tomatoes, fresh herbs and spices, 1½ cups mixed vegetables served with ⅔ cup cooked pearl (Israeli) couscous
- 100g salmon baked in the oven, served with ⅔ cup cooked quinoa, 2 cups garden salad with olive oil and vinegar dressing
- 100g lean pork stir-fried with sesame oil, fresh herbs and spices, 1½ cups mixed vegetables and 30g unsalted cashews, served with ⅔ cup cooked low-GI brown rice
- Homemade beef and vegetable soup served with a small grainy roll
- 100g prawn/seafood cooked with garlic, olive oil, cherry tomatoes and garnished with parsley, served with 1 cup cooked spaghetti and 2 cups garden salad with olive oil vinaigrette
- 100g lean steak, pan-fried with spray oil, served with 1 medium low-GI potato steamed in the jacket, 1 medium corn cob and 1½ cups steamed green vegetables with lemon juice and pepper
- 100g lean stir-fried lamb strips served in ½ wholemeal Lebanese flat bread with sliced tomato, cucumber, onion, 1 cup tabouleh and 2 tablespoons hummus
- ¾ cup bean chilli con carne, served with ½ cup cooked low-GI brown rice, ¼ avocado and 2 cups green salad
- 170g tofu stir-fried with fresh herbs and spices, 1½ cups mixed Asian green vegetables and slivered almonds, served with ⅔ cup cooked low-GI rice
- 100g lean beef bolognese sauce (made with no-added-salt tinned tomatoes, carrot, onion and garlic) served with 1 cup cooked penne pasta and 2 cups green salad with olive oil dressing

Adding flavour to meals

There are a wide variety of herbs and spices that add flavor to your dishes. Condiments, such as vinegar, lemon juice and lime juice, can also add flavour.

Using herbs, spices and condiments (such as lemon or lime juice and vinegar) can add flavour to meals.



Healthy snacks

Some people with diabetes may want to include a carbohydrate-based snack between meals. A dietitian can advise you on whether you need to include snacks and the best choices to make.

What to drink

It's important to stay hydrated throughout the day. Water is the best drink, but alternatives include:

- » mineral or soda water flavoured with sliced lemon/lime/frozen berries/cucumber/fresh mint
- » black/oolong/green/herbal tea
- » coffee or decaffeinated coffee with skim or low-fat milk.

As an occasional substitute, diet cordial or diet soft drink may add variety without extra sugar or kilojoules.

A dietitian can help you with healthy meals ideas and recipes suitable for the whole family.



More information

An accredited practising dietitian can help you decide on the best food choices for you. Contact the Dietitians Association of Australia on **1800 812 942** or visit daa.asn.au.

For healthy recipe ideas, visit your Diabetes Australia state or territory website.

Further fact sheets about managing your diabetes, related health, emotional health and lifestyle can be found on the NDSS website at ndss.com.au.

The NDSS and you

A wide range of services and support is available through the NDSS to help you manage your diabetes. This includes information on diabetes management through the NDSS Helpline and website. The products, services and education programs available can help you stay on top of your diabetes.