



Taking Control of Diabetes



Like many chronic conditions, diabetes is a condition that--while serious--should not deprive you of a long and fulfilling life. With that said, the things that you do on a day-to-day basis can end up making a huge difference in how the condition affects your health and quality of life.

This guide will help you become familiar with the essential diabetes management tools, so that you can go about your days confidently making choices that will bring you closer to achieving your personal health goals.

Diabetes Management at a Glance

Firstly, what does it mean to self-manage your diabetes?

Effective self-management of diabetes means that you know how to:

- ❖ **Check your blood sugar** level when needed
- ❖ **Watch for symptoms** of diabetes and know what to do and when
- ❖ Follow a **healthy eating plan**
- ❖ Maintain regular **physical activity** and a healthy weight
- ❖ Effectively **manage stress** and emotions
- ❖ **Take your medications** properly and as prescribed

When it comes to your diabetes, there are certain things that play a crucial role in determining how your condition changes over time. These are known as the **Diabetes A-B-C's**-- the 3 numbers that are important for you to know and keep track of, which we will now cover...

Knowing Your A-B-C's

A - A1c ("Hemoglobin A1c" or "HbA1c"):

- This is a measure of how well your blood sugars have been controlled over the past 3 months.
- For most people with diabetes, the goal is to keep the A1c **below 7%**

B - Blood Pressure:

- Goal is to keep BP **below 140/90** mmHg

C - Cholesterol:

- **LDL** (bad cholesterol) → under 100 mg/dl
- **HDL** (good cholesterol)
 - Men → above 40 mg/dl
 - Women → above 50 mg/dl
- **Triglycerides** → under 150 mg/dl

Note: The numbers provided above are general guidelines; your personal target depends on your overall health and may be lower or higher as determined by your physician.

Eating With Diabetes

There used to be the thought that having diabetes meant that you needed to deprive yourself of many of the foods you enjoy. The good news is that this is no longer true! Research has shown that it is okay to still eat your favorite foods--**as long as you are careful of the amount you eat** (which means for some people, enjoying those foods in smaller portions or less often). The key, therefore, is in how well you plan your meals.

Not sure where to start? The **Create Your Plate Method** is a simple and effective way to manage your blood sugar levels and lose weight. With this method, you don't need special tools or calculations; **you simply choose the foods you want to eat and fill your plate in a particular fashion that automatically guides your portion sizes.** So let's see how this is done...

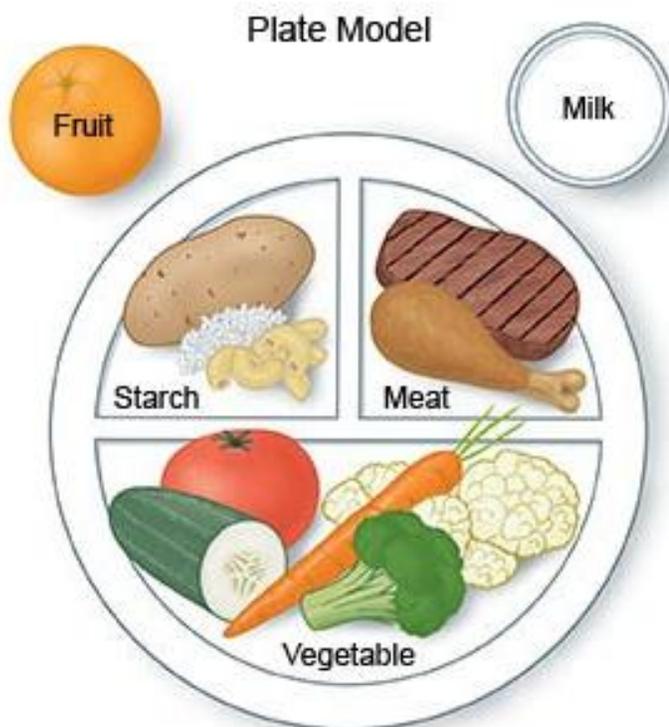
Foods and Drinks to Limit

- Fried foods and other foods high in saturated fat and trans fat
- Foods high in salt (sodium)
- Sweets, such as baked goods, candy, ice cream
- Beverages with added sugars, such as juice, regular soda, and regular sports or energy drinks

A Note on Fatty/Oily Foods

- Choose healthy fats in small amounts
- Examples of healthy fats:
 - Extra virgin olive oil and canola oil
 - Nuts and seeds
 - Avocado
 - Fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, and mackerel

The Create Your Plate Method



How to Create Your Plate

1. Using a **9-inch dinner plate**, put an imaginary line down the middle of the plate. Then on one side, half it again so that you have three sections on your plate.
2. Fill the **largest section** with non-starchy **vegetables**.
3. In one of the **small sections**, put **grains and starchy foods**.
4. In the other **small section**, put your **meat or protein**.
5. Add a serving of **fruit** and a serving of **dairy**.
6. To complete your meal, add a low-calorie drink like water, unsweetened tea, or coffee.

As you see, if you follow this simple method, you will automatically eat larger portions of healthy vegetables and a smaller portion of calorie-dense starchy and fatty foods. When you are ready, you can try new foods within each food category. **Therefore, the key to eating with diabetes is to eat a variety of healthy foods from all food groups, in healthy portions.**