

# Meal Planning for People with Diabetes at a Glance



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 RÉGIE RÉGIONALE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX NUNAVIK

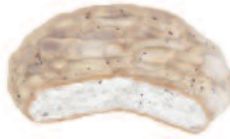


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 Diabetes Program/Programme diabète

When you have diabetes, your body has trouble using the energy circulating in the form of **glucose** (sugar) in your blood, which is why your glycemia (blood sugar level) may rise above normal values.

Glucose circulating in the blood comes mainly from the carbohydrates (sugars) that you eat. Carbohydrates are found naturally in many foods:

- They are found naturally in **plain milk and yogurt, grain products, beans, fruits and some vegetables and their juices, etc.**



- They are added to **cookies, sweetened drinks, candies, cakes, granola bars, flavoured milks and yogurts, etc.**

If you have diabetes, this does not mean that you should **eliminate** all carbohydrates from your diet since carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy. You should instead **keep a close eye on the amount of carbohydrates you eat and spread them out over at least three meals per day** in order to control your blood sugar level.

## What amount of carbohydrates do you need?

The amount of carbohydrates that people need every day depends on various factors such as age, gender, height, weight and level of physical activity.

In general, most people need:

- 45 to 75 g of carbohydrates per meal
- 15 to 30 g of carbohydrates per snack, if required

The sugar cube method allows you to visualize the amount of carbohydrates in each food group, making it easier to estimate the total amount in your meals and snacks. Each sugar cube represents 5 grams of carbohydrates (or 1 tsp. or 1 sachet of sugar).



= 15 g of carbohydrates = 1 serving

## Blood sugar level target

To avoid or delay complications affecting your eyes, kidneys, nerves, blood vessels and heart, blood sugar level should normally be between:

- **4 and 7 mmol/L** before meals
- **5 and 10 mmol/L** 2 hours after eating the first bite

## Tips to help you control your blood sugar level and your weight

- Physical activity offers many benefits for people with diabetes. To get maximum benefits, here are a few recommendations:
  - Do **30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity** (walking at a brisk pace, picking berries, fishing, hunting, dancing, swimming, cycling, etc.) most days of the week. This activity can also be divided into ten-minute sessions.
  - Add 2 sessions of resistance exercises using light weights each week.
  - Take advantage of your daily activities (household chores, grocery shopping, sewing, etc.) to get moving, and embrace active ways of getting around (walking, cycling, etc.).
- Eat **3 balanced meals every day**. Avoid skipping meals. Snacks are not always necessary. However, if you feel hungry between meals or your diabetic medications require them, eat a nutritious snack. For example:
  - During the day: 1 fresh fruit or 175 g ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup) of yogurt
  - In the evening: 1 piece of bannock (2 inches X 2 inches) with 15 mL (1 tbsp.) of peanut butter or 250 mL (1 cup) of milk
  - **Raw vegetables can be eaten any time of the day!**
- Eat your meals and snacks at **regular hours**. Space your meals at 4 to 6 hour intervals and, if needed, eat snacks 2 to 3 hours after meals.
- Go for **high-fibre foods** when possible: whole grain bread, high-fibre cereals, beans, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.
- **Limit your intake of sugar-rich foods with little nutritional value:** donuts, cookies, fruit drinks, pop, candies, brown sugar, sugar-rich cereals, chocolate, jam, cakes, molasses, honey, pastries, syrups, sugar, pies, etc. If you eat these foods, **eat very small servings** and then, **only occasionally**.
- **Drink water regularly** to quench your thirst. Choose water for your every day beverage and reduce your intake of pop, fruit drinks and juices.
- If you use **sugar substitutes** (e.g. aspartame, cyclamate, saccharine, sucralose, stevia) or food products containing them, do so **in moderation**.
- If you drink **alcohol** such as wine, beer or hard liquor, do so while eating. Limit yourself to 1 or 2 drinks a day, but don't drink alcohol every day. Alcoholic beverages can raise or lower your blood sugar level. They can also cause weight gain because they are a source of calories. Check with your doctor to find out whether there are risks associated with consuming alcohol in your situation.

## Tips for a healthy heart



**Limit your intake of foods that are high in bad fats and unhealthy (saturated and trans):** bacon, butter, cookies, deli meats, chocolate, cream, ice cream, chips, fried foods, cheeses with a fat content over 20%, cakes, hydrogenated margarine (hard), commercially prepared muffins, pastries, lard, cream-based sauces, shortening, etc. Keep in mind that a healthy weight helps control your blood glucose levels.

**Limit your intake of very salty foods:** condiments (ketchup, mustard, etc.), deli meats, chips and other salty snack foods, marinades, ready to eat or frozen meals, sauces (soy, BBQ, etc.), commercially prepared soups and salad dressings, etc.

**Use less salt when cooking and avoid adding salt at the table.** Spice up your food with herbs, onion, garlic, lemon juice, etc.

# A Healthy Plate for Each Meal:

A balanced meal containing 45 to 75 g of carbohydrates looks like this:

## Milk and Alternatives

1 serving



## Fruits or Berries

1 serving



## Vegetables

2 servings or more  
At least 2 varieties



## Starches

1 to 3 servings



## Meat, Fish and Alternatives

1 serving



## Fats

1 to 3 servings

Use your hand to measure the size of your servings



Your fist equals roughly 250 mL (1 cup), or 2 servings of starches, 2 servings of fruits cut into pieces or 2 servings of vegetables.



Your thumb equals roughly 15 mL (1 tbsp.), or 1 serving of nuts or seeds.



The palm area of your hands equals about 90 g (3 oz.), or 1 serving of meat, poultry, fish, or tofu.

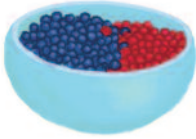


The tip of your thumb equals about 5 mL (1 tsp.), or 1 serving of traditional fat, vegetable oil or margarine.

# Examples of Meals

## Breakfast

Berries  
175 mL (¾ cup)



**1 Fruit**

Jam  
15 mL



**1 Starch  
+ 1 Other Food**

Canola Oil  
10 mL



**2 Fats**

Milk  
30 mL



**Coffee or tea**

Number of sugar cubes in this meal = 9 

## Lunch

Vegetable  
Soup



**1 Vegetable**

Margarine Non-  
hydrogenated  
10 mL



**2 Fats**

Canned Pears  
125 mL (½ cup)



**1 Fruit**

Milk  
250 mL



**1 Milk and  
Alternatives**

**1 Meat, Fish and  
Alternatives + 2 Vegetables  
+ 2 Starches**

Number of sugar cubes in this meal = 12 

## Dinner

Roasted Caribou  
with Vegetables



**1 Meat, Fish and Alter-  
natives + 2 Vegetables**

Bannock  
Small Piece



**1 Starch**

Canola Oil  
10 mL



**2 Fats**

Blueberries  
175 mL (¾ cup)




**1 Fruit**

Fruit Flavoured  
Yogurt 100 mL



**1 Milk and  
Alternatives**

Number of sugar cubes in this meal = 9 

# Food to Eat Every Day

Starches 1 serving = 15 g of carbohydrates =



Examples: 1 small piece of bannock 2 inches OR  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of **cooked** pasta OR  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of **cooked** rice OR  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of corn niblets

Fruit 1 serving = 15 g of carbohydrates =



Examples: 1 medium-sized fruit OR  $\frac{1}{2}$  banana OR 15 large grapes OR  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of 100% pure unsweetened fruit juice

Milk and Alternatives 1 serving = 15 g of carbohydrates =



Examples: 1 cup of milk OR  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of plain yogurt OR 100 ml of fruit or flavoured yogurt

Vegetables 1 serving = 0 g of carbohydrate (negligible)



Examples: ½ cup of **cooked** vegetables OR 1 cup of **raw** vegetables

Meat and Alternatives 1 serving = 0 g of carbohydrate



Examples: 3 oz. of caribou OR fish OR 1 cup of **cooked** beans (also equals 2 servings of starches)

Fats 1 serving = 0 g of carbohydrate



Examples: 1 tsp. of canola or olive oil OR 1 tsp. of non-hydrogenated margarine  
OR 1 tbsp. of nuts or seeds

# Nunavik Food Guide



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