

Fact Sheet:

Healthy cooking ideas

Healthy eating for people with diabetes is no different from what is recommended for everyone. You do not need to prepare separate meals or buy special foods. You can make healthy and nutritious meals suitable for everyone by choosing ingredients and recipes that are high in fibre and low in saturated fat, added sugar and salt (sodium).



Choosing healthy ingredients

Try some of these healthier swaps when preparing meals or following recipes at home.

Fats and oils

Instead of:	Choose:
Butter	Polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats such as olive, canola or sunflower oils
Cream	Low-fat plain yoghurt, reduced fat evaporated milk, buttermilk, reduced fat ricotta, low-fat milk or cashew cream (soaked and blended cashew nuts)
Sour cream	Light cream, sour cream or low-fat plain yoghurt
Cream-based dressings	Olive oil mixed with balsamic vinegar or lemon juice
Coconut milk and cream	Reduced fat coconut milk, coconut flavoured light evaporated milk or coconut essence mixed with low-fat milk thickened with a small amount of cornflour



Dairy foods

Instead of:	Choose:
Full-fat milk	Low-fat or skim milk, calcium-fortified soy milk or other unsweetened calcium-fortified plant milks
Cream cheese	Reduced fat ricotta, low-fat cottage cheese or extra light cream cheeses
Hard cheese	Reduced fat cheese or small amounts of a stronger flavoured cheese (such as parmesan) or a nut-based cheese
Yoghurt	Low-fat natural or diet yoghurts

Meat, chicken and fish

Instead of:	Choose:
Fatty meat	Lean cuts of meat with visible fat removed or lean mince
Poultry with skin	Skinless chicken or turkey (breast or thigh)
Sausages	Lean meat rissoles or meatballs
Deli meats	Shredded BBQ chicken, lean roast meats, turkey or chicken breast
Fried or crumbed fish	Fresh or canned fish

Breads, cereals, legumes, and nuts

Instead of:	Choose:
White bread	Dense grainy or seeded bread, wholemeal sourdough or rye bread
Calrose or jasmine rice	Low glycemic index (GI) white or brown rice, basmati rice, quinoa, barley, freekeh, burghul or pearl couscous
Legumes canned in brine	Dry or no-added-salt canned legumes (such as kidney beans, chickpeas, four-bean mix, lentils)
Salted nuts	Unsalted nuts
White flour for baking	Wholemeal flour, nut flour, legume flour, or a mixture of wholemeal and white flour
Shortcrust or puff pastry	Filo pastry (brushed with egg white or milk instead of oil), reduced fat puff pastry or a base made with wholegrain bread, crushed nuts, or low GI rice



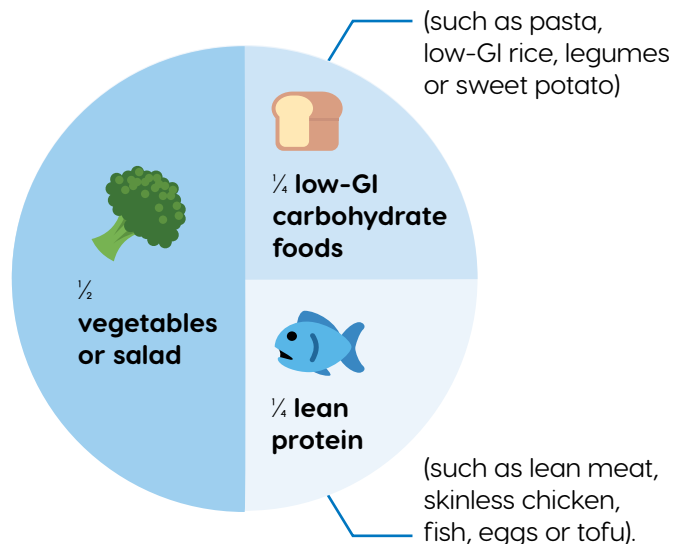
Healthy cooking methods

Try the following healthy cooking methods:

- Use low-fat cooking methods, such as steaming, stir-frying, poaching, grilling, barbequing or microwaving.
- Use a non-stick pan or try using a dish lined with baking paper when baking.
- Use cooking spray oil or small amounts of olive, canola or sunflower oil.
- Cook casseroles in advance. Skim the fat off with a spoon when they have cooled.
- Roast large cuts of meat on a rack over a baking tray to drain excess fat.
- Cook vegetables, chicken or fish in a steamer.
- Try baking fish in the oven or on the barbeque wrapped in foil. Add lemon juice and herbs like parsley for flavour and to keep the fish moist.
- Replace some of the meat in casseroles, stews, curries and mince dishes with legumes such as lentils, chickpeas or kidney beans.
- When making roast vegetables or homemade chips, try partially cooking in the microwave, then brush or spray with oil and bake until crisp. Leave the skin on where possible.
- Instead of salt, use herbs and spices such as parsley, basil, oregano and rosemary, pepper, garlic, chilli or curry powder, along with vinegar, lemon or lime juice to flavour foods.
- Use less sugar in cakes and muffins by adding mashed, chopped or pureed fruit instead.

Choose the right serving size

Serving sizes are important to help you manage your diabetes and maintain a healthy weight. As a guide for main meals, aim to balance your plate like this:



The below is a general guide for lunch and dinner.

- Fill a 1/4 of your plate with lean meat, skinless chicken, fish/seafood, tofu, legumes or eggs.
- Fill a 1/4 of your plate with a carbohydrate (carb) food that has a lower glycemic index (GI) such as pasta, low-GI rice, quinoa, barley, soba, mung bean or rice noodles, legumes, corn on the cob, low-GI potato/sweet potato.
- Fill 1/2 of your plate with salads or non-starchy vegetables. Add them to every meal.
- Use small amounts of healthy fats and oils when preparing meals.



Healthy cooking

Reduce sugar

- You can use small amounts of sugar in healthy recipes.
- If a recipe contains a large amount of sugar, reduce the amount, modify the ingredients or use an alternative sweetener as a substitute.
- Swapping sugar for a sweetener affects the taste and texture of cooking. For best results, check the packaging and choose one that suits your needs.

Reduce salt

- Check the sodium content per 100 gram (g) listed on the nutrition information panel.
- Choose products with the lowest sodium where possible, with less than 120 mg per 100 g.
- Look for products that are 'salt reduced' or have 'no added salt'
- Avoid putting salt on the table.
- Add herbs, lemon juice, onions, ginger, garlic, chilli, vinegar, wine or salt-reduced stock for extra flavour.





More information and support

- Go to ndss.com.au to search for the 'Making healthy food choices', 'Understanding food labels' 'Glycemic index', 'Alternative sweetener' and other fact sheets.
- Go to ndss.com.au to access the Carb Counting program online and other NDSS programs and services in your state or territory, or online.
- For more information about the glycemic index, go to glycemicindex.com and gisymbol.com.
- Go to dietitiansaustralia.org.au to find a dietitian or call Dietitians Australia on **1800 812 942**.



Top tips

- Choose nutritious ingredients and healthier cooking methods to create healthy meals for the whole family.
- Serving sizes are important to help you manage your diabetes and maintain a healthy weight.
- Talk to a dietitian about serving sizes that are right for you and how to adapt your favourite recipes to fit into your eating plan.



Notes

The NDSS and you

Whether you have just been diagnosed with diabetes, or have been living with diabetes for a while, the NDSS provides a range of support services, information, and subsidised products to help you manage your diabetes, stay healthy and live well. For access to more resources (including translated versions), or to find out more about support services, go to ndss.com.au or call the **NDSS Helpline** on **1800 637 700**.

This information is intended as a guide only. It should not replace individual medical advice and if you have any concerns about your health or further questions, you should contact your health professional.