



# 81 Eating & Exercise Tips for Diabetes Prevention

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*By Karen Marschel, RD, LD, CDE*

## **Quick Start Weight Loss with Carb Changes**

**Are your favorite foods pasta, potatoes, and breads?**

You don't need to cut them out of your diet completely. Just change your habits by eating smaller starch portions and switching refined starch foods to higher fiber whole grain foods. Higher fiber foods help blood sugar by preventing the quick spike up in blood sugar. Soluble fibers in oatmeal, beans, fruits and veggies act like a sticky sponge to carry cholesterol out of the body. Fiber also helps weight control by staying with us longer to control hunger, and lowers calorie content of foods.

Many people have been told that carbohydrates are bad foods and you should not eat them at all if you are worried about diabetes or weight. Not true. Carbohydrate is what our body uses for energy. It's a lot like the gas for cars – so we do need carb foods. But when we overload our body with carbs all at once more insulin is needed to keep blood sugar under control. The trick is portion control and whole grains.

Try these tips to cut back on starch intake and get more whole grains. When I mention calories keep in mind that women trying to lose weight may need to keep their meals to 400 or 500 calories and for men 500-700 calories.



1. Eat no more than 2 slices bread at a meal. Each slice is about 100 calories.
2. Skip the second helpings and don't clean your kids' plate. That extra scoop of potatoes with butter could be 150 calories or more.
3. Use smaller plates, bowls and glasses? The more we can put on our plate the more we will eat.
4. Keep serving bowls off the table out of reach so it's not as easy to eat extra helpings.
5. Add more non-starchy vegetables to fill you up with less calories and carb. One cup corn has about 150 calories but one cup green beans, cauliflower, carrots or other non-starchy vegetable will only have 25-50 calories per cup.
6. You can also add a salad to your meals a few times a week. Just don't choose fat-free dressing because often you get more sugar and salt added to those. Salad dressings are oil based so they are healthy fats. Just control the amount you use.
7. Switch from white bread to wheat and then to whole grain breads. Whole grain breads can have 5 grams of fiber per serving.
8. Choose the healthier form of potato. One large baked potato with sour cream or 1 cup mashed potatoes made with milk and butter will both be around 250 calories but a large order of fries is about 600 calories!
9. Try to choose cereals with at least 3 grams fiber per serving. Oatmeal is one of the best foods to help lower LDL cholesterol. Even if you want quick oatmeal choose the quick cooking oats instead of the instant. They cook just as fast in the microwave.
10. Choose croissants and muffins less often as they have more added fat and are generally high calorie. Compared to the slice of bread under 100 calories, a croissant is 230 calories and a medium muffin 160 calories.
11. You can get a variety of tortillas such as whole wheat or tomato basil flavored. Calories and carb will be similar to bread.
12. Taco shells can be a great meal choice because 2 hard shells are only 50 calories.



13. A small bagel is about 150 calories but a large bagel shop size bagel is 285 calories on average. For every tablespoon of cream cheese add another 40 calories.
14. Eat brown rice or wild rice more and white rice less often. 1 cup of white rice is 3 carbohydrate servings with very little fiber.
15. Choose a whole wheat or whole grain pasta to increase the fiber. There is also a brand called Dreamfields pasta which has a fiber called inulin added to lower the amount of carbohydrate the body will absorb. Inulin is also a prebiotic, good for your digestive tract.
16. When you are switching to higher fiber foods be sure to drink enough water also to keep the fiber moving through the digestive tract. If you don't get enough fluid you may experience cramping, gas or bloating.
17. Beans and legumes are an excellent source of fiber and nutrients. Every ½ cup of beans or lentils provides 7-8 grams fiber.
18. Barley is also an excellent source of fiber with 8 grams fiber for ¼ cup raw.
19. Kashi cereals and other foods are all a good choice for whole grain, higher fiber. They also have a healthy frozen dinner option.
20. Flax seed is great to add to cereals, soups or any food. Flax seed provides fiber and the omega-3 fatty acid ALA.

<b>FOR SWEET CRAVINGS</b>
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21. Try fresh fruit for morning snacks, dessert after lunch and with supper. Be sure to choose fruit in season for best taste. Frozen is the next best when fresh is not available. Fruit is very helpful in weight loss because it has a high water content, and average of 2 grams of fiber per serving, and low calories.
22. Dried fruits are a great source of fiber also but add up quicker in the calories. For example 12-15 grapes = 2 Tbsp raisins. So you can grab a handful of grapes for fewer than 100 calories but a handful of raisins will be twice the calories.



23. Fruits are also great source of potassium, which helps lower blood pressure.
24. Plan a sweet in for an afternoon or evening snack daily if needed. This is better than depriving yourself and eventually overeating that food.
25. We all have our foods that we simply have no power over portion control. Mine is French silk chocolate ice cream. I have found it works better to buy it only 2-3 times a year and not worry about my overeating for the short time it takes me to finish it off!
26. For the chocolate craving try dark chocolate. It seems to satisfy the craving with a smaller amount.
27. If you are on-the-go you can also set a rule in your house that any sweets need to be homemade. When you have less time you are less likely to have made something sweet, but when you do at least you will really enjoy it and appreciate the taste more! You will also be getting less preservatives and additives with homemade sweets.
28. For many people ice cream is a great bedtime snack. An average bowl of ice cream with 3 scoops will be at least 400 calories. You could use a cake cone instead and reduce the calories in half. Some find it easier to just go out once or twice a week for an ice cream treat instead of having it in the house for easy access.
29. Donuts will cost you about 200-300 calories each. If your office likes to have donuts around, suggest some alternatives such as fruit, bran muffins, small whole grain bagels, yogurt & granola, or any other healthier alternative.
30. Sugar-free foods may not be a better option but they are okay in limited amounts. Usually they are made with an artificial sweetener or sugar alcohol. They are not always lower in calories and may not satisfy the sweet craving. This really has to be a personal choice. I recommend using artificial sweeteners in limited amounts even though they are approved to be safe.
31. Using regular sugar, honey, jelly or syrup is okay – especially when they are homemade. A teaspoon averages only 20 calories and remember – people do



not get diabetes from eating sugar unless they are eating so much they are gaining weight.

32. Portion control on the sweets is very important. Here are some comparisons on calories. Examples of a 100 calorie serving of candy would be a snack size candy bar, 4 chocolate kisses, or 4 Smarties rolls.
33. Pie is usually quite high calorie. The lowest calorie pies are pumpkin and strawberry at about 250 calories per slice and the highest is pecan pie at 450 calories per slice.

**Drinking Too Much Energy = Weight Gain**

Check out these tips on your favorite drinks.

34. Juice: If you like 100% fruit juice every day, keep the serving to 8oz when possible. Juice is high calorie and easy to drink large amounts quickly. Think about the difference between eating an orange or orange juice. It takes longer to eat the orange; you get the fiber, about 60-100 calories, and the combination of fiber and water in fresh fruits help with appetite control. In comparison, an 8oz glass of orange juice takes very little time to drink can raise blood sugar quickly, provides 120 calories. There are some vegetable juices and other juice blends that are not high calorie or high carb and can be very healthy.
35. Juice drinks are those that are only 5-10% juice. These are like drinking soda and should be consumed sparingly or never. Kids are drinking too much of these and not enough water or milk.
36. Soda: Do you drink soda every day? Remember that every 20oz bottle is 250 calories with no health benefits.
37. Diet soda does not give you any calories or raise blood sugar but you do need to keep artificial sweeteners to moderate amounts. Some people are sensitive



to aspartame and will get headaches or body aches. Saccharin tells you on the package that it can cause cancer in rats. Why would I want to push my luck and put something in my body that might contribute to cancer when I can easily avoid it? I have not so far read or heard any negative side effects from Splenda but it is still quite new on the market.

38. Tea: Brewed teas black or green are good for us. Caffeine and polyphenols in green tea may work together to help boost metabolism. The bottled and instant teas do not have the same benefits and usually have added sugar so stick to the brewed tea. Diet tea would be the same as drinking diet soda.
39. Coffee: Studies on coffee seem to go back and forth on whether it is good for us or not. Since I love a good cup of coffee I choose to believe it is not harmful and may even have potential health benefits. If you are sensitive to caffeine then drink coffee in moderation and remember that any added sugar and cream will add calories. A healthy limit on caffeine is about 12oz daily.
40. Sports Drinks: These generally have less sugar and calories than soda. A 20oz PowerAde has 160 calories and 41 grams carbohydrate. A 20oz Gatorade has 125 calories and 32 grams carb. Their light versions have about 60 calories and 16 grams carb.
41. Energy Drinks: There is really nothing in these drinks we need for nutrition. Most are about 200-250 calories and 50-70 gms carb for 16oz. So you are getting more sugar, more caffeine and other chemicals you don't know.
42. Milk: Milk provides calcium, vitamin D and B vitamins our body needs. It is not necessary to avoid milk because it has natural sugar. Drink 1% or skim to keep the fat and calories lower. An easy way to add milk back in to your diet is have milk with 2 meals or snacks daily on a regular basis. If you are only drinking small amounts 2% is fine. If you do not like milk, just make sure you get your calcium from another source. There are a variety of milks: cow's milk, rice milk, soy milk and others.
43. Smoothies/Shakes: These can be very healthy because you can put a lot of nutrition in with fruit, yogurt, milk, juice, etc. But be careful of portions



because they tend to be high calorie. Fruit smoothies range from 115-200 calories and 29-47 grams carb for a 12 oz serving.

44. Alcohol: If you are trying to control weight moderation is a must when it comes to alcohol. Many are not aware of the high calorie content of alcohol. Your average 12oz beer has 140 calories, light beer has 110 calories, a 6 ounce glass of wine has 135 calories, Mikes Hard Lemonade 11oz - 240 calories, wine coolers are about 230 calories, a Daiquiri averages 140 calories, Pina Colada averages 325 calories, Margarita about 160 calories, and a Martini 210 calories. Every shot of 80 proof alcohol has 100 calories. Alcohol can raise blood pressure, and contribute to belly fat, fatty liver, and weight gain.
45. Water: Why do we need to drink water? Water is important for many processes in our body: helps digestion, prevents constipation, regulates body temperature, lubricates joints, flushes toxins out, carries nutrients, and provides moisture for ear/nose/throat area. We often don't drink enough water. If you are fatigued you may be mildly dehydrated. There is no magic number but most experts agree that about 8 cups water daily is sufficient. Our body weight is about 60% water and we lose about 10 cups daily so it is important to replace that fluid. We do get water from foods and other liquids also. Juice, milk, coffee, tea and other beverages do count but if they have high amounts of caffeine, sugar or calories then the negative effect starts to outweigh the benefit. Vitamin waters are really of no added benefit and may provide extra carbs or calories we don't need.

### **Hunger Control Tips**

46. Eat breakfast every day. Skipping breakfast and late night snacking tend to go together because when we eat too much before we go to bed we tend to not be hungry in the morning. Before you know it skipping breakfast is a regular



habit. If you are not hungry in the morning just drink a small glass of juice or milk. This will at least get your body started burning calories. As you eat less at night you will feel hunger in the morning.

47. Eat regular meals. What happens when you go all day without eating? You get extremely hungry and overeat, right? Our bodies process blood sugar, fat, and calories much more efficiently when we eat smaller meals with snacks as needed for hunger. When we eat more at once than our body can burn off, the extra gets turned into fat and we all know where that fat accumulates.
48. Snacks can help control hunger. What are the best snacks? Fruit, veggies, yogurt, string cheese, trail mix, or nuts are great but really you can have anything you want as long as you control the portion.
49. Choose foods high in water content. Most fruits, veggies, soups and yogurt have a high percentage of water and will fill you up with fewer calories.
50. Take a mental note of your hunger level before, during and after eating. What does your stomach feel like? You want to see if you are experiencing true physical hunger or if you are eating for other reasons. Feeling a little growling or empty stomach is okay unless it causes you to overeat at your next meal.
51. If you know you are an emotional eater and you are overeating in response to your emotions on a regular basis then the best thing to do is to deal with the source of the emotion. Journal, email or talk to someone about the problems. Try alternate outlets for your emotional comfort such as bubble baths, massages, quiet time, prayer, reading time, take a walk, listen to soothing music, garden, watch a movie, take up a sport or anything that gives you time for yourself to relieve stress.
52. Be positive about your body. You need to feel confident and respectful of your body before you will want to take care of it. Wear clothes that make you feel good. Stop yourself when you start criticizing your body.
53. Don't step on the scale too often. You will usually notice your clothes fit looser before the scale shows a drop in weight. Remember that the scale is measuring total body weight which includes muscle and water, not just fat.



54. Try to be around people who are positive and a healthy influence for you when it comes to eating, exercise and body image.

### **Boost Your Metabolism**

55. Eat breakfast daily. I mentioned it before when we talked about hunger control but it is worth repeating. Eating breakfast gets the engine fueled. You will be more mentally alert, have more physical energy, and if you have kids you will be modeling a great eating habit they will pick up on.

56. Eat small, frequent meals. You will be less likely to gain body fat because you won't eat enough to have excess energy.

57. Exercise. This is by far the best way to increase metabolism. To burn fat you need aerobic exercise 3-6 days/week. You can add strength training 2-3 days/week to build muscle, which will then burn more energy. Exercise is amazing for blood sugar control in Type 2 diabetes or prediabetes. It's almost like pulling the drain plug and getting rid of all the extra sugar that your body is taking a bath in. But remember, being busy is not the same as exercise. If you have prediabetes or diabetes, exercise is part of your medicine and if you don't get any, you will be on more medication eventually.

58. Schedule exercise into your day ahead of time. Our reasons for not exercising are many but the biggest barrier is time. Be realistic about how often or how long you can exercise. Start with a goal of 10 minutes 3 days a week if you are pressed for time.

59. Choose 2 or 3 exercises you like. If you enjoy the exercise it's easier to stick with it.

60. Get a step counter (pedometer) to track your progress.

61. Join a gym and hire a personal trainer to get you started.

62. Get a dog to walk.



63. Find a walking buddy.
64. Set up your exercise equipment where you can watch TV or listen to music.
65. Use a stability ball to do strength and balance exercise while watching TV.

### **Less Belly Fat, Better Food Fat**

Belly fat is referred to as visceral fat, or the fat around your organs. Too much belly fat puts you at higher risk for diabetes and heart disease.

How does our eating affect our belly fat? There are actually several kinds of fat – some healthy and some that contribute to disease.

66. Omega 6 fats: this type of fat is found in corn oil and soybean oil and the amount we use has increased over the years because we eat more processed foods. Go check a few boxed foods in your kitchen cupboard and you will likely find soybean oil in the ingredient list. So there's your answer as to why our intake of soybean oil has increased over the years – we eat more processed foods. Too much omega-6 fat can increase inflammation.
67. Eat more foods high in Omega 3 fats. There are 3 omega-3 fats – DHA, EPA and ALA. The first two are found in fatty fish such as tuna, salmon, trout, mackerel, and herring. ALA is the plant source of omega-3 and is found in flax seed and walnuts. Omega-3 fats help reduce inflammation. If you can eat fish high in omega 3 twice a week you can get a good base amount for heart disease prevention. If you don't like fish then you can take fish oil capsules. Remember to read the dosage directions on your supplement bottle. If your doctor recommends 1000mg or 1gram fish oil daily, that actually means 1000mg EPA/DHA. What you need to do is add the EPA and DHA amounts. Most bottles



have about 300mg of these once you add them together so that means you need 3-4 pills to get 1000mg of omega-3. You also want to buy a brand you feel has good quality. Since supplements are not regulated you have no guarantee what is actually in the bottle. Flax seed is a grain and can be purchased as seed or milled. You need to eat the ground form to get the health benefits because the body can not break down the seed form. Once it is ground be sure to keep it refrigerated. Add 1-2 tablespoons to cereal, yogurt, or any dish you are having. You will get the benefit of the omega-3 and the fiber! Many of my clients use flax seed to control constipation and to lower cholesterol.

68. Monounsaturated fats are also anti-inflammatory and good for our heart and cholesterol. The Mediterranean Diet is high in monounsaturated fats and includes regular intake of foods like olive oil, canola oil, avocados and nuts. Eating these good fats can lower blood pressure, cholesterol and reduce risk for diabetes.
69. Trans fats are not good for our health. Some trans fats are naturally found in animal foods but most of our excess trans fats are from processed fat in packaged foods. Stick margarine is the classic example of trans fats. When stick margarine is made oil is process to become solid. This process is called hydrogenation and you will often see the words “partially hydrogenated” on ingredient labels. The chemical process of making oil more solid creates trans fats which have been found to raise artery clogging cholesterol (LDL) and lower artery cleaning cholesterol (HDL). Trans fat amounts are required to be on labels by FDA and you want to try to keep your intake as close to zero as possible. The simplest way to think about this is to eat less processed food.
70. Saturated fats can also raise cholesterol. Just think of saturated fat as solid fat like lard or butter. Whole and 2% milk, cheese and fatty meats are also high in saturated fat. Some snack foods and bakery products are high in saturated fats as well. Check the labels and try to keep saturated fat less than 20 grams daily. You do not need to quit eating cheese and eggs. My recommendation is to



choose small portions of less processed cheese. I don't like fat-free cheese for the taste or texture. Cheese is naturally high fat. If there is no fat, is it really cheese anymore? How much fat-free, sugar-free, artificial stuff should we really put in our body? Eggs have a little saturated fat but are also a very good protein source. They have gotten a bad reputation over the years due to their higher cholesterol content. Saturated and trans fats are more the problem in raising blood cholesterol so I recommend eating less of those and not worrying so much about the eggs.

71. Remember that how much we eat affects how much belly fat we accumulate. Any time we eat more than we can burn off, the extra energy goes to fat storage and extra fat gets stored to body fat very efficiently. Recent research has also found that eating a high-fat diet just 3 days can interfere with the signal our brain gives to other organs such as the liver to make less sugar. So not only do we want to eat healthier fats, we want to portion control our fats and our overall calorie intake to prevent belly fat accumulation and control blood sugar.

#### **On the Go Eating Awareness**

Are you too busy to prepare meals? Eating out too often has immediate financial costs and long term health consequences. Typically restaurant meals will have high salt, fat and calorie content. Portions are almost always 2-3 times what we should eat for healthy weight management. Start using some of the tips below to manage eating on-the-go.

72. FAST FOOD: Order small sandwiches, small fries, salads, and milk or water. Single burgers will be around 300 calories but larger sandwiches can end up packing 500-1200 calories. Even 3 chicken strips are 500 calories. Fries will add 300-500 calories to the meal.



73. ORDERING OFF A MENU: If you frequently go to restaurants where you order off the menu I strongly suggest you get a reference book or website and have a plan to control calories. Unless you are eating a salad with only veggies in it you will likely end up with anywhere from 700 to 2000 calories for the meal. That's not counting dessert or drinks!
74. CONVENIENCE STORE: More convenience stores have fruit and salads available to grab and go but they are not always the tastiest option. I think the bigger problem when we stop for gas is the temptation to buy sodas, candy bars, donuts or other treats. If this is a problem use the pay-at-the-pump option so you don't even have to go in and be tempted.
75. BUFFETS: One plate of food and dessert at the buffet will easily add up to 1000 calories but just one plate defeats the purpose of the all-you-can-eat value right? That's why avoiding buffets completely is your best option.
76. COFFEE SHOP: Sweet rolls, donuts and muffins will be 200-400 calories each, high fat and no fiber. If you have cappuccino or latte with it you will be loaded with sugar, fat and caffeine for a few hours.
77. DELI: If you go to your local grocer's deli for lunch you can often find tasty salads that are less than 500 calories per cup. The key is to make that your meal and not your side dish.
78. PIZZA: Pizzas with more meat and cheese and thicker crust will have more calories. For example at Pizza Hut the Meat Lovers stuffed crust pizza is 520 calories per slice but the Veggie Lovers thin 'n crispy crust is only 180 calories. So I can have 3 slices of the veggie pizza for the same calories as one slice of meat lovers' pizza.
79. ICE CREAM: Did you realize that a Dairy Queen medium chocolate chip cookie dough blizzard has over 1000 calories? Shakes and malts from any restaurant will average 800 calories. Cones average 200-300 calories. So most often I choose the cone, dilly bar or ice cream sandwich. But when I really want that blizzard or bigger ice cream treat then I will occasionally just make that my meal instead of having it as extra calories that I can't burn off.



80.STATE FAIR FOODS: Just for fun here are some calorie amounts in fair foods.

Corndog 250 calories, Cotton candy 625 calories, fried Twinkie 420, soft pretzel 340, snow cone 270, caramel apple 330, pizza on a stick 535 calories, 18oz lemonade 210 calories.

81.AT THE GAME FOODS: chili dog 520 calories, nachos 1100 calories (40 chips & 4oz cheese), 8oz peanuts in the shell 930 calories, small popcorn 575 calories, 16oz beer 200 calories.

*I hope you have found these tips useful.*

*If you would like a free 30 minute phone consultation to answer questions about your diabetes prevention situation, or just want to email me some questions I would love to hear from you!*

*Email me at [Karen@dietmn.com](mailto:Karen@dietmn.com)*

*You can also check out my blog at [www.karenmarschel.typepad.com](http://www.karenmarschel.typepad.com)*