

To print this page, please select File at the top of this window and then choose Print.

Extra Tips for People with Diabetes

- A free food is one with less than 20 calories and 5 grams carbohydrate per serving. Examples include diet soft drinks, sugar-free gelatin dessert, sugar-free ice pops, sugarless gum, and sugar-free syrup.
- Sugar-free does not mean carbohydrate-free. Compare the total carbohydrate content of a sugar-free food with that of the standard product. If there is a big difference in carbohydrate content between the two foods, you may want to buy the sugar-free food. If there is little difference in the total grams of carbohydrate between the two foods, choose the one you want based on price and taste. Make sure to read the label carefully to make the best choice.
- "No sugar added" foods do not have any form of sugar added during processing or packaging, and do not contain high-sugar ingredients. But remember, they may still be high in carbohydrate, so you have to check the label.
- Fat-free foods can be higher in carbohydrate and contain almost the same calories as the foods they replace. One good example of this are fat-free cookies. Fat-free foods are not necessarily a better choice than the standard product, so read your labels carefully.

To print this page, please select File at the top of this window and then choose Print.

Taking a Closer Look at the Label

The information on the left side of the label provides total amounts of different nutrients per serving. To make wise food choices, check the total amounts for:

- calories
- total fat
- saturated fat
- cholesterol
- sodium
- total carbohydrate
- fiber

Using the information found in total amounts

Total amounts are shown in grams, abbreviated as g, or in milligrams, shown as mg. A gram is a very small amount and a milligram is one-thousandth of that. For example, a nickel weighs about 5 grams. So does a teaspoonful of margarine. Compare labels of similar foods. For example, choose the product with a smaller amount of saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium and try to select foods with more fiber.

Calories

If you are trying to lose or maintain your weight, the number of calories you eat counts. To lose weight you need to eat fewer calories than your body burns. You can use the labels to compare similar products and determine which contains fewer calories. To find out how many calories you need each day, talk with your dietitian or certified diabetes educator.

Total Fat

Total fat tells you how much fat is in a food per serving. It includes fats that are good for you such as mono and polyunsaturated fats, and fats that are not so good such as saturated and *trans* fats. Mono and polyunsaturated fats can help to lower your blood cholesterol and protect your heart. Saturated and *trans fat* can raise your blood cholesterol and increase your risk of heart disease. The cholesterol in food may also increase your blood cholesterol. Learn more about specific types of fat.

Fat is calorie-dense. Per gram, it has more than twice the calories of carbohydrate or protein. Although some types of fats, such as mono and polyunsaturated fats, are healthy, it is still important to pay attention to the overall number of calories that you consume to maintain a healthy weight. If you are trying to lose weight, you'll still want to limit the amount of fat you eat. That's where the food label comes in handy.

Sodium

Sodium does not affect blood glucose levels. However, many people eat much more sodium than they need. Table salt is very high in sodium. You might hear people use "sodium" in lieu of "table salt," or vice versa.

With many foods, you can taste how salty they are, such as pickles or bacon. But there is also hidden salt

To print this page, please select File at the top of this window and then choose Print.

Reading Food Labels

Reading labels can help you make wise food choices. Most packaged foods in the grocery store list nutrition information on the package in a section called the Nutrition Facts.

- The Nutrition Facts tell you the serving size and the amount of various nutrients such as total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and fiber per serving.
- Nutrient content claims such as "low fat" provide a reliable description of the product.
- The list of ingredients shows the ingredients in descending order by weight.
- Foods that are exempt from the label include foods in very small packages, foods prepared in the store, and foods made by small manufacturers.

The Nutrition Facts

Here's an example of a Nutrition Facts section. At the top, you'll see the serving size and the number of servings per container. The information on the label is for the serving listed.

The serving on the food label may not be the same as the serving size in your food plan or the serving you normally eat.

If you eat twice the serving listed on the label, you would need to double all the numbers in the Nutrition Facts section.

For example, if you usually eat 2 cups of chili with beans, you'll need to double all of the numbers in this Nutrition Facts section.

Taking a Closer Look at the Label

The information on the left side of the label provides total amounts of different nutrients per serving.

Nutrient Content Claims & Percent (%) Daily Value

Ever wonder what the difference is between fat free, saturated fat free, low fat, reduced and less fat? What to learn what the Percent (%) Daily Value is? Check out this section.

Extra Tips for People with Diabetes

Learn additional tips on reading food labels.

| Chili with Beans | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Nutrition Facts | |
| | |
| | |
| Calories | V. Daily Value |
| Total Fat : | |
| Cholesterol • | |
| Sodium | |
| Total Carbohydrate | |
| Protein :5 | |

To print this page, please select File at the top of this window and then choose Print.

Protect Your Heart: Make Wise Food Choices

How can food choices help keep my heart and blood vessels healthy?

Diabetes increases your chances of having a heart attack or a stroke. But you can protect your heart and blood vessels by

- eating less of the foods that raise your blood cholesterol and your chances of heart disease
- eating more of the foods that lower your cholesterol and your chances of heart disease

Choosing foods wisely can also help you lose weight and keep your blood glucose (sugar) levels on target.

How can I make wise food choices?

Try these steps to help protect your heart and blood vessels:

Eat less fat, especially saturated fat and trans fats, and fewer high-cholesterol foods. Saturated fat is found in meat, poultry skin, butter, 2% or whole milk, ice cream, cheese, lard, and shortening. You'll also want to cut back on foods that contain palm oil or coconut oil.

Trans fats are produced-when liquid oils are turned into solids. This process is called hydrogenation. Cut back on foods that list hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils on the labels. This type of fat is found in crackers and snack foods, baked goods like cookies and donuts, french fries, and stick margarine. Use a soft margarine in place of butter or stick margarine. Look for soft margarine in a tub that lists a liquid oil such as corn, safflower, soybean, or canola oil as the first ingredient.

Egg yolks and organ meats such as liver are high in cholesterol. Check the Nutrition Facts and the list of ingredients on food labels.

Choose the kinds of fat that can help lower your cholesterol. If you use cooking oil, choose olive oil or canola oil. Nuts have a healthy type of fat as well. Corn oil, sunflower oil, and safflower oil also protect your heart. However, all oils, nuts, and fats are high in calories. If you're trying to lose weight, you'll want to keep servings small.

Have fish 2 or 3 times a week. Albacore tuna, herring, mackerel, rainbow trout, sardines, and salmon are high in omega-3 fatty acids, a type of fat that may help lower blood fat levels and prevent clogging of the arteries.

Use special cholesterol-lowering margarine. Having 2 to 3 tablespoons of a cholesterol-lowering margarine every day can lower your cholesterol. These margarines contain plant stanols or plant sterols, ingredients that keep cholesterol from being absorbed. You'll find several types at the grocery store in the margarine section.

Cook with less fat. You can cut down on total fat by broiling, microwaving, baking, roasting, steaming, or grilling foods. Using nonstick pans and cooking sprays instead of cooking with fat also helps.

Eat more foods that are high in fiber. Foods high in fiber may help lower blood cholesterol. Fiber also can prevent problems with the digestive system such as constipation. **Oatmeal, oat bran, dried beans and**

peas (such as kidney beans, pinto beans, and black-eyed peas), fruits, and vegetables are good sources of fiber.

Include more soy protein in your meals and snacks. Replacing foods high in saturated fat with soy-containing foods may help lower your cholesterol. Foods with soy protein include soybeans, tofu, miso, tempeh, soy nuts, soy milk, textured soy protein, soy protein powder, and items that are made from soybeans, such as burgers.

Limit your alcoholic beverage consumption. Drinking light to moderate amounts of alcohol is associated with a low risk of heart disease, perhaps by raising HDL (good) cholesterol levels. There isn't enough information to recommend that people who don't drink should start drinking alcohol to reduce heart risk. But, for those who do drink alcohol, 1 serving daily for women and up to 2 servings daily for men have been associated with good health. Drinking more than 1 to 2 drinks per day isn't helpful; it contributes unnecessary calories and may actually raise your blood pressure and triglycerides. In addition, it can cause other health problems. It's best to discuss drinking alcohol with your health care provider to find out whether it may be helpful for you.

A Day of Heart-Healthy Meals

Breakfast

Fresh orange sections
Oatmeal with 1% milk and raisins
Toast with cholesterol-lowering margarine
Coffee with 1% milk

Lunch

Sliced turkey on whole wheat bread with lettuce and mustard
Carrot sticks
Cherry tomatoes
Fresh apple

Dinner

Baked chicken
Baked potato with cholesterol-lowering margarine and low-fat sour cream
Steamed green beans
Tossed salad with low-fat salad dressing
Low-fat frozen yogurt

Between-meal Snacks

Dried fruit air-popped popcorn rice cakes with peanut butter