

## ***Your Guide to Diabetes Food Choices***

No single food will provide all the nutrients your body needs. Eating a variety of foods is important. The main nutrients found in foods are carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals. **Carbohydrates** provide energy. Healthy choices include dried beans, peas, lentils whole grain breads, cereal, crackers, and fruit. **Protein** is needed for growth and repair of the body. Healthy choices include lean meats and low fat dairy products. The body needs a little **fat**. But, too much is not good, because it may increase your risks of heart disease, and is also high in calories. Fat is found in many foods including red meat, dairy products, salad dressings, butter, margarine spreads, and sweet baked desserts. Nuts, olive and canola oils are healthier choices for blood vessels and should be included in small amounts.

### **Some things to remember:**

- **Eat a variety of foods** to get all nutrients.
- **Eat regular meals and snacks** at about the same time each day. Don't skip meals.
- **Eat less fat** and avoid fried foods. Choose to bake, broil, grill, boil and steam your food. Remove extra fat from meat and use lean cuts of meat. Include more fish and poultry. Drink non-fat milk and limit eggs to 3-4 per week and only eat liver and other organ meat occasionally. Choose to use liquid oils or soft margarine from tubs.
- **Include higher fiber foods.** Fiber comes from plants and may help decrease your blood glucose and cholesterol. Include bran cereals, cooked beans, peas, whole grain breads, fruits and vegetables.
- **Eat less sugar.** Eating less sugar may help control blood sugar, choose complex carbohydrates such as those found in dried beans, lentils, whole grains breads, cereal and vegetables. Avoid eating large amounts of cookies, cakes, pastries, candies, or sugared cereals. Drink beverages that are sugar free. A regular soda has 10 teaspoons of sugar.
- **Eat less salt.** Too much salt may increase your blood pressure. Limit processed foods including bacon, lunchmeats, cheeses, canned soups, fast food items, convenience snacks and chips.
- **Use caution with alcohol.** Limit or avoid alcohol depending on the medications you take. Alcohol contains empty calories and can cause low blood sugar in some people with diabetes who take insulin.

**Balance your food choices and activity** to help control blood sugar. Avoid eating large portions. Spread your food choices out through the day and choose a variety in each food group.

### **Food groups include:**

- Choose at least 6 servings per day of **whole grains, cereals, and breads**. Choose at least 5 servings daily of **fruits and vegetables**.
- Choose at least 2-3 servings per day of **dairy** products
- Choose at least 6 ounces per day of meat fish, poultry eggs, dried beans and nuts. You should work with a dietitian to design a meal plan that is right for you. It should include food you enjoy and tells you how much and what to choose from in the food groups. Contact your medical doctor for a referral to a dietitian near you.