

# Diabetes Food List

Diabetes is a chronic condition that raises blood sugar levels, potentially damaging nerves and blood vessels. In the U.S., over 38 million people have diabetes, with 90–95% being type 2 diabetes. Regular blood sugar checks and healthy eating are essential for early detection and effective management.

A diabetes plate is a visual guide used to help manage portion sizes and balance macronutrients for individuals with diabetes. It divides the plate into sections for different food groups: half for non-starchy vegetables, a quarter for lean protein, and a quarter for carbohydrate-rich foods like whole grains or starchy vegetables. Here are the food groups for diabetes based on this plate model, designed to promote stable blood sugar levels and overall health.

Food group	Examples
Non-starchy vegetables	Asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage (green, red, napa, Chinese), bok choy, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, eggplant, jicama, kale, collards, mustard greens, Swiss chard, mushrooms, nopales (cactus), okra, onions, leeks, green beans, pea pods, snow peas, and sugar snap peas, bell peppers and hot peppers (jalapeño, poblano, and others), lettuce, spinach, arugula, endive, zucchini, yellow squash, chayote, or spaghetti squash, radish or daikon, tomatoes, tomatillos.
Lean protein foods	Chicken, turkey, and eggs, salmon, cod, tuna, tilapia, and swordfish, shrimp, scallops, clams, mussels, and lobster, lean beef cuts such as chuck, round, sirloin, flank, and tenderloin, lean pork cuts such as center loin chop and tenderloin, lean deli meats, cheese and cottage cheese.  <i>Plant-based sources of protein include beans, lentils, hummus, falafel, nuts, nut butters, edamame, tofu, tempeh, and plant-based meat substitutes.</i>
Carbohydrate foods	Brown rice, bulgur, oats/oatmeal, polenta, popcorn, quinoa, and whole grain products (bread, pasta, and tortillas), corn, acorn squash, butternut squash, green peas, parsnips, plantains, potatoes, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes/yams, beans and legumes such as black, kidney, pinto, and garbanzo beans and lentils, fruits and dried fruit, dairy products like milk, yogurt, and milk substitutes (e.g., soy milk).
Drinks or beverage	Unsweetened tea (hot or iced), unsweetened coffee (hot or iced), sparkling water/club soda, infused water or sparkling water without added sugar, diet soda or other diet drinks.

*Note: Always consult a healthcare provider or dietitian to ensure the recommendations suit your individual health needs.*

## Additional notes

---

## References

American Diabetes Association. (n.d.). *What superstar foods are good for diabetes?* <https://diabetes.org/food-nutrition/food-and-blood-sugar/diabetes-superstar-foods>

American Diabetes Association. (n.d.). *Statistics about diabetes.* <https://diabetes.org/about-diabetes/statistics/about-diabetes>

The American Diabetes Association. (2020, February 20). *What is the diabetes plate?* <https://diabetesfoodhub.org/blog/what-diabetes-plate>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, May 15). *Diabetes basics.* [https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/about/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/about/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html)