



# What Can I Eat?

Healthy Choices for American Indians  
and Alaska Natives with Type 2 Diabetes



## Class 2:

Fitting Sweet Foods into a  
Healthy Diabetes Eating Plan

Participant Booklet





# Introduction

One of the first things people ask when they get diabetes is “What can I eat?” In this class, we will discuss how Native people with diabetes can eat better and be healthier.

**We will:**

1. Show you tools that make it easy to choose healthy foods
2. Practice physical activities that can improve your blood glucose
3. Teach you about mindfulness, which can help you make better food choices
4. Set goals to help you stay on track

**We will be practicing these skills in class.**

# Class 2:

## Fitting Sweet Foods into a Healthy Diabetes Diet

In this session, we are going to:

- Identify sweet foods and drinks
- Practice using the Diabetes Plate Method to fit sweet foods into a healthy diet
- Learn about sweet drinks and unsweetened drinks
- Learn a new physical activity and practice it for 10 minutes
- Try a mindful practice that can help us make healthy nutrition choices
- Set a goal to work on over the coming week

# Table of Contents

---

- Sweet Foods and the Diabetes Plate....6

---

- Healthy Drink Nutrition Label Example.....8

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- Physical Activity With Exercise Bands.....10

---

- Mindful Nutrition Choice Activity.....12

---

- Goal Planner.....15

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- Healthy Native Drink Recipes.....19

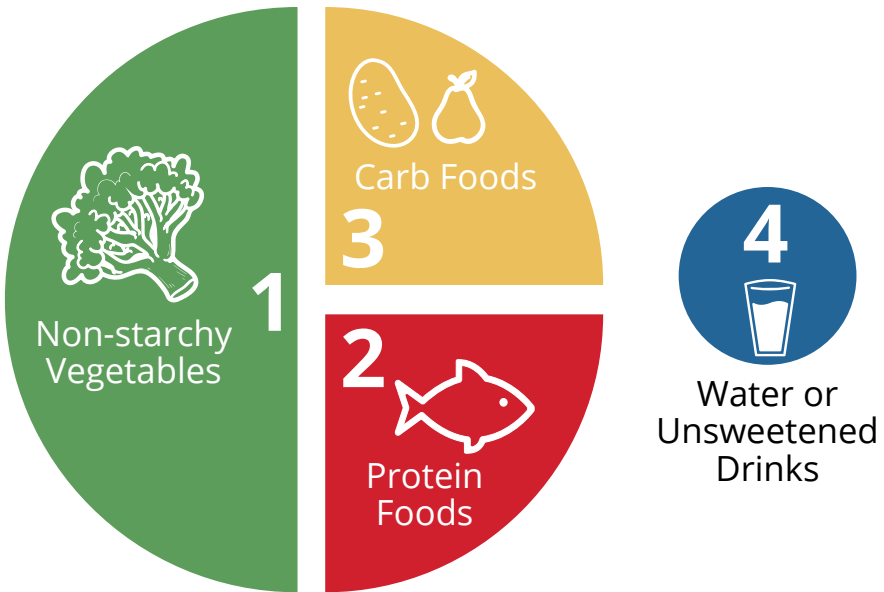
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- Exercise Band Exercises.....23

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# Sweet Foods and the Diabetes Plate Method

Sweet foods and drinks make our blood glucose go up. In fact, sweet carb foods may increase blood glucose faster than the starchy carb foods we talked about in our first class. This means we need to limit the sweet foods we eat. If we do eat sweet foods, we can use the Diabetes Plate Method to fit them into our meal.



Sweet foods fit into the **carb section** of our Diabetes Plate Method. You can see that section in yellow. This means if you have a sweet food at a meal, you should not have any other carb food at that meal. For example, at a birthday party if you have cake, you should not have any other carb food (like bread, rice, pasta at that meal).

**This is important:** Sweet foods can fit into the Diabetes Plate, but sweet drinks never fit into the Diabetes Plate. You can see on the Diabetes Plate that the drink is always water or an unsweetened drink.

## How much sugar is healthy?

Adults should eat 6–9 teaspoons of sugar a day or less.

If you drink just 1 can of regular soda, you are already getting 10 teaspoons of sugar. And, that's if you don't eat any other sugar all day! That is why **sweet drinks never fit into the Diabetes Plate.**



# Sweet drinks have a lot of sugar and will make blood glucose go up fast.

## What drinks have a lot of sugar in them?

Here are some common ones:

- Regular soda
- Energy drinks
- Juice
- Kool-Aid
- Tang

It is best if people with diabetes do not drink these beverages at all. Instead, choose drinks that have no sugar. We call these unsweetened drinks. It is best if you choose drinks without sugar or artificial sweeteners. The food label on these drinks will say that there are:

- 0 calories
- 0 sugar
- 0 carbohydrate

On this label, you can see that calories, total carbohydrate, and sugar are all 0.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
2 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>8 oz</b>
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>0</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
<b>Sodium</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	<b>0%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>



## Examples of unsweetened drinks are:

- Water
- Seltzer water (also called club soda, carbonated water, or sparkling water)
- Water with fresh fruit in it
- Tea (with no sugar added)
- Black coffee
- Traditional drinks in your community that do not have sugar

See page 19 of this participant booklet for some recipes for unsweetened drinks.



# Physical Activity

To help manage your blood glucose, it is best to do 30 minutes of physical activity every day.

## **What counts as physical activity?**

Anything that gets your body moving counts!

Try to do things that get you breathing a little faster than normal or that make your heart rate go up a little bit. You should be able to talk while you exercise but not sing.



## How can I get 30 minutes of physical activity every day?

There are some easy ways to be more active every day.

- Get up and move for a few minutes every 30 minutes.
- Take “dance breaks” with your kids with fun music.
- Park your car at the far end of the parking lot.
- Take stairs when you can, instead of elevators (even to go up one floor).
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Set a timer to remind yourself to move every 30 minutes.
- Use the exercise band from class and try the exercises in the back of this participant booklet.



You may want to start with just 5 minutes a day and work your way up to 30 minutes a day.

You don't have to do 30 minutes of activity all at once. You can be active for even 5 minutes at a time, several times a day.

# Mindful Nutrition Choice Activity

Sometimes, we make unhealthy food choices without meaning to. For example, we might eat more or make unhealthy choices when we feel stressed. Or, we might eat something we know is not healthy because we just don't stop to think about whether it would be a good choice.

**You can make healthier food choices by being more mindful.**

Being mindful means paying attention to what you are doing right now. We spend a lot of time thinking about the past and worrying about the future. When you are being mindful, you are paying attention to:

- What is happening right now
- How your body is feeling right now

There are many ways to be mindful. One tool is visualization. **Visualization** means picturing things in your mind.

Before you make a choice about what to eat, try this:

1. Sit up straight
2. Place your feet flat on the floor
3. Rest your hands on your lap
4. Close your eyes (or softly gaze at the ground in front of you)
5. Breathe in for a count of 5 (count in your head to

yourself 1...2...3...4...5...)

6. Breathe out for a count of 5 (count in your head to yourself 1...2...3...4...5...)
7. Picture your next meal, snack, or drink in your mind
8. Think about what a healthy version of this meal, drink, or snack would look like
  - What would it taste like?
  - What would it smell like?
  - How would it feel in your mouth?
  - How would your body feel after eating or drinking this healthy item?
9. Visualize how strong, healthy, and re-energized you will feel after eating or drinking this healthy item

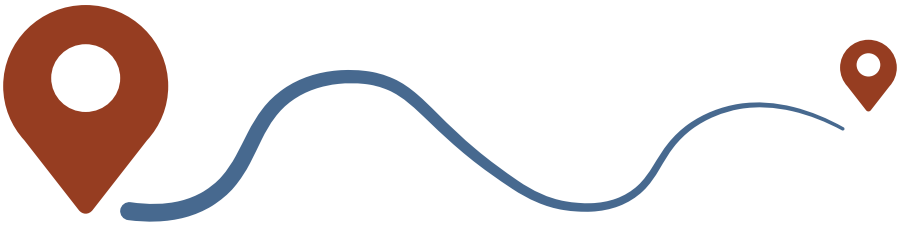
Try using this exercise before you make choices about what to eat. At first, you can try it just a few times a week. Eventually, it would be great to try it before every meal, snack, or drink.



# Summary

## To be healthy, you can:

1. Limit the amount of sweet foods you eat.
2. Use the Diabetes Plate to help you limit sweet foods in your diet. They should fit into the carb section of your plate.
3. Only choose unsweetened drinks.
4. Drink mostly water.
5. Be physically active for 30 minutes a . You can break your activity up into 5-10 minute periods several times a day, as long as it adds up to 30 minutes.
6. Practice visualization (picturing something in your mind) to help you make the healthy food choices you want to make.



# Goal Planner

To be successful in changing behaviors and learning new skills, it is helpful to make goals. Planning out the details of your goal can help you to achieve it.

1. Choose a goal listed below, or make a goal of your own.
2. Prepare for your goal.

## Choose A Goal

Please choose a goal and fill in the blanks. Or, you can write a different goal related to class that isn't listed.

**Choose 1 change you can make for the next week.**

**Be more physically active.**

I will be physically active on Monday Tuesday  
Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday  
(circle all that apply).

I will be physically active for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes each time.

A good time of day for me to be active is \_\_\_\_\_.

The activity I would like to try first is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.



**Try one new unsweetened drink.**

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The unsweetened drink I will try is \_\_\_\_\_.

I can start on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week).

I will try drinking an unsweetened drink \_\_\_\_\_ times this week.

**Teach a family member or a friend how to choose unsweetened drinks.**

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A person I would like to teach is \_\_\_\_\_.

I can teach them on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week).

I will tell them about my healthy drink choice:

\_\_\_\_\_.

**Use the mindful visualization exercise to help me make healthy food choices.**

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I can do mindful visualization on \_\_\_\_\_ (day of week).

A good time of day for me to practice visualizing healthy choices is:

\_\_\_\_\_.





### Other:

This is a goal to help with:

- Food Choices       Drink Choices
- Being Active       Being Mindful
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Goal details: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What days of the week will I do this goal? Monday  
Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday  
Sunday (circle all that apply).

## Prepare for Your Goal

What do you need to do to get ready for your goal? For example, will you need to go to the grocery store? Will you need to have a family meeting?

The steps I need to take to prepare for my goal:

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**Tell someone about your goal.**

I will tell \_\_\_\_\_ about my goal.

**For next week, please:**

- 1. Work on your **goal**.
- 2. **Bring in an example** that represents a time you or your family made a healthy drink choice. You can also bring in a photo of the drink or the label from the drink. You could take the photo with your phone.
- 3. Come ready to **share** an example of a drink item or photo of a healthy choice you made.

Our next class is on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Day of week and date) (time)



# Healthy Native Drink Recipes

## Ingredients

- 4 tea bags (any flavor you like)
- 4 cups of water
- 2 cups of ice cubes
- 3 cups carbonated water or sparkling water (optional)
- ½ cup to 1 cup berries or other fruit (optional)



## Directions:

1. Boil water.
2. Remove from stove and add tea bags and allow to steep for about 5 minutes.
3. Remove tea bags and place tea in a glass jar.
4. Add berries or fruit, if desired.
5. Place glass jar in the refrigerator.
6. Chill tea for 2-4 hours or longer.
7. When ready, serve cold over ice or with a little seltzer water for an added fizz, if desired.

## **Berry Spritzer**

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of blueberries (or another berry)
- 4 cups of carbonated water or regular water



Directions:

1. Mash the berries.
2. Add carbonated or regular water to mashed berries and place in jar or other container.
3. Place jar in refrigerator and allow to sit for 2-4 hours.
4. Pour over ice and enjoy.

## **Mint Drink**

Ingredients:

- Large handful of mint leaves
- 4 cups of water

Directions:

1. Boil water.
2. Crush mint leaves and place in pot of boiling water.
3. Stir leaves into boiling water.
4. Remove from heat.
5. Enjoy this tea hot or place in the refrigerator until cold.



## Sagebrush Tea

Ingredients:

Large handful of sagebrush

6 cups of water

Teaspoon of honey (optional)

Directions:

1. Rinse the sagebrush.
2. Boil water.
3. Add sagebrush to boiling water.
4. The longer it boils, the stronger the taste.
5. Enjoy this drink hot with a teaspoon of honey (optional).



## Labrador Tea (Tundra Tea)

Ingredients:

Labrador plant leaves

4 cups of water

Directions:

1. Boil water.
2. Place 1 teaspoon of Labrador plant leaves in the bottom of a mug or teacup.
3. Pour water over the top of the leaves.
4. Allow the leaves to steep for 5 minutes.
5. This drink can be enjoyed hot or cold.



## **Juniper Tea**

Ingredients:

20 sprigs of juniper

4 cups of water

Directions:

1. Wash sprigs and place in water.
2. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.
4. Strain and serve.



# Exercise Band Activities

## Bicep Curl (Upper Arm Curl)

- Sitting down, step on the right handle of the exercise band so the band is secure.
- Use your right hand to hold the handle on the other side of the exercise band.
- With your right elbow on the inside of your right knee, curl the band up.
- Do not move your elbow.
- Do this 10 times and then switch sides.



## Deltoid Lift (Shoulder Lift)

- Standing or sitting, hold 1 handle of the exercise band over your belly button.
- Use the other handle to lift from your shoulder.
- Your elbow should be bent at a 90-degree angle.
- Do this 10 times and then switch sides.



## Tricep Raise (Upper Arm Extension)

- It is easiest to do this exercise standing up.
- Holding 1 handle of the exercise band behind your neck, grab the other resistance band handle and pull up.
- Your elbow should be held close to your head.
- Do this 10 times and then switch sides.



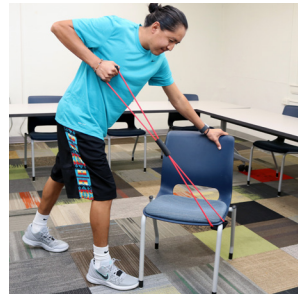
### **Lat Pulldown (Shoulder and Chest)**

- Standing up, hold both arms straight above your head.
- Grip each handle, in each hand.
- Pulling the exercise band handles away from each other, pull the band down in front of your face.
- Your elbows should be bent.
- The band should be so close to your face that you have to turn your face to the side to not nip your nose with the band.
- Do this exercise 10 times.



### **Chair Row (Top of Back)**

- Using a (day). 4-legged chair, place handle of the exercise band around the chair leg farthest from you.
- Hold the other handle in your hand.
- Hold on to the back of the chair for support.
- Stagger your feet, with 1 foot pressed against the chair leg for support and the other leg further back.
- Bend over, sticking your butt out and keeping your back straight.
- Your back should not be curved.
- With your elbow at a 90-degree angle, pull the exercise band.
- Do this 10 times.
- Switch sides by moving to the other side of the chair and putting the handle around the furthest chair leg.





## Quad Kick Out (Front of Upper Leg)

- Sitting in a chair, place 1 end of the resistance band around the right, front chair leg.
- Place the other end of the stretch band around your right ankle.
- Slowly lift your leg straight out by bending your knee.
- Do this 10 times and then switch to the left leg of the chair and your left leg.



## Hamstring Kick Back (Back of Upper Leg)

- Standing up, face the back of a chair.
- 1 end of the exercise band should be around the right chair leg.
- The other end of the exercise band should be around your right ankle.
- With your butt out and back straight, slowly lift your right leg behind you.
- Do this 10 times and then switch to the left chair leg and your left leg.



## Inner Thigh Cross Over

- Standing sideways in front of a chair, place 1 hand on the back of the chair for support.
- 1 end of the resistance band should be on the chair leg closest to you.



- The other end of the resistance band should be on the ankle closest to the chair.
- With a bent knee, slowly sweep the leg with the resistance band on it in front of your body.
- This is not a big motion.
- Do this 10 times on your right leg and then 10 times on your left leg.

### Outer Thigh Lift


- Standing sideways in front of a chair, place 1 hand on the back of the chair for support.
- One end of the resistance band should be on the chair leg closest to you.
- The other end of the resistance band should be on the leg farthest from you.
- With only a slight bend in your knee, lift your outer leg away from your body.
- Do this 10 times on your right leg and then 10 times on your left leg.



### Belly Crunch

- This is best done with a partner.
- If you are doing the exercise, you will be sitting in a chair.
- Both of your hands should be holding 1 end of the exercise band just above your head.
- Your partner should stand behind you





and hold the other end of the exercise band tight.

- You should pull the band forward, close to your knees, by tensing your stomach muscles.
- Do this 10 times and then switch so your partner has a turn.



**What Can I Eat?®**

## **Centers for American Indian & Alaska Native Health**

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**Healthy Choices for American Indians and Alaska Natives with Type 2 Diabetes**

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