

Best Foods For You: Making Healthy Food Choices

Making Choices

A large part of taking care of diabetes is making choices about your food. The best choices are foods that are high in fiber and nutrients and low in saturated fat, added sugar, and sodium. This information will help you make healthy food choices.

Non-starchy Vegetables

The best choices are fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables and vegetable juices without added salt (sodium), fat, or sugar such as:

- Carrots
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Broccoli
- Eggplant
- Nopales
- Green beans
- Mushrooms
- Tomatoes
- Spinach and other leafy greens
- Onions
- Peppers

If using canned veggies with added salt, rinse and drain them with water to wash away some of the sodium.

Fruit

The best choices are fresh, frozen, and canned fruits without added sugars such as:

- Apples
- Blueberries
- Oranges
- Grapefruit

- Grapes
- Peaches
- Pears

If you use canned fruit in syrup, drain and rinse the fruit with water to wash away the extra syrup.

Milk

The best choices are low-fat milk and yogurt without added sugars such as:

- Fat-free or low-fat milk (1%)
- Unflavored plant-based milk
- Plain, nonfat yogurt
- “Light” yogurt

Grains and Starchy Vegetables

The best choices are whole grain foods, beans, peas and lentils, and starchy vegetables without added fats, sugars, or sodium.

Best Choices of Whole Grain Foods

Look for products with these whole grains as the first ingredient:

- Whole wheat flour
- Whole oats/oatmeal
- Whole-grain corn/corn meal
- Popcorn
- Brown rice
- Whole-grain barley
- Wild rice
- Buckwheat/buckwheat flour
- Bulgur (cracked wheat)
- Millet
- Quinoa

Best Choices of Legumes and Lentils

- Beans such as black, pinto, and kidney
- Lentils and dried peas
- Fat-free refried beans



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Best Choices of Starchy Vegetables

- Acorn squash
- Butternut squash
- Sweet potato
- Parsnip
- Pumpkin
- Plantain
- Corn

Protein

The best choices are plant-based protein foods, seafood, poultry, and lean meats such as:

- Beans and lentils
- Nuts and seeds
- Fish and seafood
- Eggs and lower-fat cheese
- Chicken, turkey, and duck without the skin
- Buffalo, rabbit, and venison
- Lean cuts of beef, lamb, and pork such as chuck, rump roast, round, sirloin, T-bone, and tenderloin

Fats

Best choices are:

- Unsaturated fats like omega-3, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated fats
- Avocado and olives; seeds such as flax, pumpkin, or sesame; and all nuts
- Oils such as olive, canola, corn, flaxseed, safflower, soybean, and sunflower
- Oil based salad dressing

Omega-3 fatty acids are good for your heart.

When picking your fat sources, consider these foods:

- Albacore tuna, mackerel, halibut, herring, salmon, sardines, and trout
- Flaxseeds and English walnuts
- Oils such as olive, canola, soybean, flaxseed, and walnut

Go Easy

- Avoid regular soda, fruit punch, sports drinks, sweet tea, and other sugary drinks. Choose water and calorie free drinks instead.
- Cut back on high calorie snack foods and desserts such as chips, cookies, cakes, and ice cream.
- Cut back on processed and fatty meats like hot dogs, luncheon, and breakfast meats; full fat dairy and lard, butter, and high-fat sauces and gravies.
- If you choose to eat these foods, keep portions small.



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