



What is the Diabetes Food Pyramid?

The Diabetes Food Pyramid gives a range of servings. If you follow the **MINIMUM** number of servings in each group, you would eat about 1,600 calories; if you eat at the upper end of the range, it would be about 2,800 calories.

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*The **Diabetes Food Pyramid** divides food into **SIX** groups. These groups or sections on the pyramid vary in size. The largest group (grains, beans, and starchy vegetables) is on the bottom. This means that you should eat **MORE** servings of grains, beans, and starchy vegetables than of any of the other foods. The smallest group (fats, sweets, and alcohol) is at the top of the pyramid. This tells you to eat very **FEW** servings from these food groups.*



Food Pyramid

Pyramid Sections:

(See section breakdowns for serving sizes on the next couple of pages.)

- **Grains and Starches:**

At the base of the pyramid are bread, cereal, rice, and pasta and other grains. These foods contain mostly carbohydrates.

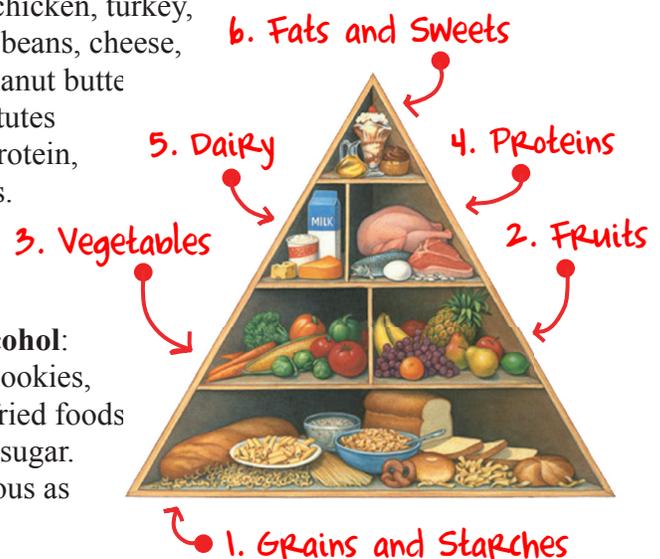
- **Vegetables:** Vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fiber.

- **Fruit:** The next layer of the pyramid is fruits, which also contain carbohydrates. Fruit has plenty of vitamins, minerals and fiber.

- **Dairy:** Have a lot of protein and calcium as well as many other vitamins. Milk, yogurt and cheese are rich in protein, calcium and other vitamins and minerals. Choose non-fat and low fat varieties.

- **Meat and Meat Substitutes:** The meat group includes beef, chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, tofu, dried beans, cheese, cottage cheese and peanut butter. Meat and meat substitutes are great sources of protein, vitamins and minerals.

- **Fats, Sweets and Alcohol:** Potato chips, candy, cookies, cakes, crackers, and fried foods contain a lot of fat or sugar. They aren't as nutritious as vegetables or grains.





Food Pyramid

Checking for Portion Sizes:

This is where the food label can come in handy. For portion size on items like canned soup, yogurt, snack foods, sauces, etc., you can discover what is considered one serving by checking the top of the food label.

Plate Method:

Use the plate method to improve your understanding and encourage portion control when eating your meals.

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The Food Pyramid:

The Food Pyramid can help you choose from a variety of foods so you get the nutrients you need, and the suggested serving sizes can help you control the amount of calories, fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar or sodium in your diet.

✓ Grains and Starches:

Contains breads, grains, cereals and pastas. These foods provide complex carbohydrates, which are an important source of energy, especially for a low-fat meal plan. You'll need 6 to 11 servings of these foods in a day. One serving of this group can be:

- 1 slice of bread, 1/3 cup of rice, cooked cereal or pasta, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal or 1 flat tortilla

✓ Fruits and Vegetables:

Rich in nutrients. They are low in fat and sodium and high in fiber. The Food Pyramid suggests 3 to 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day. One serving of vegetables can be:

- 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables, 1/2 cup of other cooked vegetables or 3/4 cup of vegetable juice

You should avoid eating fruits in the morning and when eating a fruit it should be part of a meal - never eaten alone. The Food Pyramid suggests 2 to 4 servings of fruit each day. One serving of fruit can be:

- One medium apple, orange or 1/2 banana, 1/2 cup of chopped, cooked or canned fruit in water (*not syrup*) or 1/2 cup of fruit juice

✓ Proteins:

Meat, poultry and fish supply protein, iron and zinc. Non-meat foods such as dried peas and beans also provide many of these nutrients. The Food Pyramid suggests 2 to 3 servings of cooked meat, fish or poultry. Each serving should be between 2 and 3 ounces. The following foods count as one ounce of meat:

- One egg, 2 Tbsp. of peanut butter, 1/4 cup cooked dry beans or 1/3 cup of nuts

Choose lean meat, fish, beans and peas often because these are the lowest in fat. Remove skin from poultry and trim away visible fat on meat. Avoid frying these foods. Moderation is the watchword when it comes to nuts because they are high in fat.

You should have 30-60gm of carbohydrates a meal but usually NO MORE than 150gm for the day.

Many are excellent sources of vitamin A, vitamin C, folate or potassium.

For someone with diabetes, peas and beans are considered a starch



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Food Pyramid

Do I Need to Measure Servings?

NO. Just use servings as a general guide. Sometimes you'll have to estimate the food group servings.

For example, a generous serving of pizza counts in the grain group (*crust*), milk group (*cheese*), and vegetable group (*tomato, mushrooms, peppers and onions*). Beef stew would count for both meat and vegetable groups.

The Food Pyramid (cont.):

✓ Dairy Products:

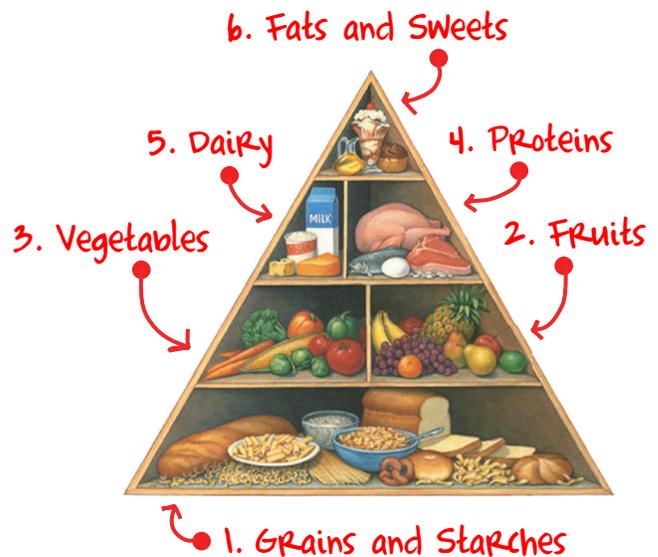
Products made with milk provide protein, vitamins and minerals, especially calcium. The Food Pyramid suggests 2 to 3 servings each day. If you are breastfeeding, pregnant, a teenager or a young adult age 24 or under, try to have 3 servings. Most other people should have 2 servings daily. Interestingly, cottage cheese is lower in calcium than most other cheeses - one cup counts as only ½ serving of milk. Go easy on high-fat cheese and ice cream. Choose non-fat milk and yogurt and cheeses made from skim milk because they are lowest in fat.

Be mindful of portion sizes with milk because they can raise your blood sugar very quickly.

✓ Fats and Sweets:

A food pyramid's tip is the smallest part, so the fats and sweets in the top of the Food Pyramid should comprise the smallest percentage of your daily diet. The foods here should be eaten sparingly because they provide calories but not much in the way of nutrition. These foods include salad dressings, oils, cream, butter, margarine, sugars, soft drinks, candies and sweet desserts.

Keep your servings small and save them for a special treat.



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Can Eating Out Be Healthy?

It can be. Plan ahead, choose wisely, and you'll find foods that fit into your meal plan.

Not everyone with diabetes has the same meal plan or the same nutritional goals. Work with your health care team to identify your own **GOALS**.

If you eat out a lot, find ways to follow your meal plan as much as possible. Pick a restaurant with a variety of choices to increase your chances of finding the foods you want.

When you eat out, order only what you need and want. Know how to make changes in your meal plan in case the restaurant doesn't have just what you want. **ASK** your server if changes can be made to satisfy your needs.

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Food Pyramid

What Should You Do to Gain Or Lose Weight?

The best way to **LOSE WEIGHT** is to increase the amount of physical activity you do and reduce the fat and sugar in your food choices. Remember to eat at least the minimum number of servings from the five different food groups of the Food Pyramid. If you choose fat and sugar rich foods and eliminate healthy foods, you won't be getting the nutrition you need. Try to choose from the lowest fat choices in the food groups.

If you need to **GAIN WEIGHT**, increase the amount of food you eat from all of the food groups. If you have lost weight unexpectedly, see your doctor.

The Food Pyramid can be extremely useful - whether you want to gain weight, lose weight or maintain your weight. Eating a healthy diet is a little easier if you base your choices on the Food Pyramid.

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