

## **DIABETES DIET**

### **Definition**

The diabetes diet consists of specific dietary guidelines developed by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association for diabetes management. The overall principles are to reduce the amount of fat, simple sugar, and salt and increase the amount of complex carbohydrates and foods high in fiber.

### **Main Focus**

The main focus is on weight management and weight control, because 80% to 90% of people with this disease are overweight. A calorie-controlled meal plan is recommended, along with appropriate physical activity. In many cases, weight control and a planned diet alone can control diabetes. Some people with diabetes must also take medications.

### **Recommendations**

- Reduce the amount of dietary fat. Current American Diabetes Association guidelines advise that less than 30% of total daily calories should come from fat sources.
- Protein choices with less fat are recommended, such as skinless poultry, fish, and lean meats. The recommended daily allowance is approximately two three-ounce servings of protein a day. A three-ounce portion of meat is approximately the size of a deck of playing cards. No more than 10% to 20% of the day's total calories should come from protein.
- Approximately 50% to 60% of the day's total calories should come from complex carbohydrates such as starches and whole-grain breads, with an emphasis on the high-fiber choices. Foods that are high in carbohydrates provide energy, minerals, and vitamins. Food sources of complex carbohydrates and fiber are fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads and cereals, dried beans and peas, and lentils and legumes.
- Use sources of simple (concentrated) carbohydrates, such as table sugar, honey, soda, juice, or syrup, in moderation. Concentrated sources of carbohydrates cause the blood sugar levels to rise quickly. Exercise caution when eating simple carbohydrates.

A registered dietitian or certified diabetic educator (CDE) can help you best decide how to include simple carbohydrates into your diet plan.