

Healthy eating with Prediabetes

Different kinds of food can impact blood sugars in various ways. Choosing the right kind can help to keep your levels balanced.

All about carbohydrates

Carbohydrates—with fats and proteins—make up the energy in the food you eat. Carbs are broken down into sugar during digestion and then absorbed into the blood stream.¹

Some carbs are healthy while others aren't. Healthy carbs provide energy to fuel the body along with other vital nutrients. Unhealthy carbs may increase your risk of weight gain, diabetes and heart disease.¹

Classifying carbs

Your body turns all carbohydrates into energy, but they are not all created equal. Foods are made up of simple or complex carbs.²

Complex carbs	Simple carbs
Complex carbs have a lot of fiber and digest slowly because they're harder to break down. They often come from whole plant foods and have vitamins and minerals.	Simple carbs are absorbed quickly because they're easy for the body to break down. They are often found in foods with lots of sugar and may add extra calories with little nutritional value.

Food and blood sugar

According to American Diabetes Association, most carbohydrates are converted into glucose (or sugar) during digestion.³ After the carbohydrates are converted, this glucose enters the bloodstream and causes blood sugar levels to rise. Normally, the pancreas would produce insulin; this hormone prompts the body's cells to absorb glucose for energy. However, in someone with diabetes, the glucose stays in the blood for longer than it should.

Effects of too much sugar

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, Americans take in about 18 teaspoons of added sugar daily.² Added sugars add extra calories but offer little nutritional value.



Consuming too much added sugar may have negative impacts on your health. Research shows that it may be linked to:

- Weight gain⁴
- Heart disease⁴
- Tooth decay⁴
- Cancer⁵

Swap unhealthy carbs for healthy ones

There are many ways to reduce unhealthy options and incorporate high-quality carbs into your diet. Some simple swaps can help you trade high-carb foods for low-carb options.

Instead of ...	Consider ...
Low-fat yogurt	Cottage cheese
Fruit smoothie	Fresh whole fruit
Snack mix	Mixed nuts
White rice	Barley or quinoa
White pasta	Spaghetti squash
Dried fruit	Dark chocolate

What is a superfood?

Superfood is a term used to promote a food thought to have health benefits. While there is no official definition of a superfood, they are often rich in healthy, disease-fighting nutrients like:^{6,7}

- Vitamins
- Antioxidants
- Minerals
- Fiber

10 diabetes superfoods to add to your diet:⁸

- 1. Berries**
Contain antioxidants, vitamins and fiber
- 2. Dark green leafy vegetables**
Low in carbs, high in vitamins and fiber
- 3. Beans**
High in fiber and protein
- 4. Citrus fruits**
High in fiber and vitamin C
- 5. Fish**
High in Omega-3 fatty acids
- 6. Nuts**
Contain healthy fat and protein
- 7. Sweet potatoes**
High in vitamin A and fiber
- 8. Whole grains**
Rich in many vitamins and fiber
- 9. Tomatoes**
Low carb and high in vitamins
- 10. Milk and yogurt**
Contain calcium and Vitamin D

What are your three favorite foods from this list of diabetes superfoods?

What recipes come to mind when seeing this list of foods? (i.e., kale salad with salmon, sweet potatoes and a greek yogurt dressing)

Sources

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