



Healthy Eating for Life

Healthy eating is a lifestyle choice. Use the 80–20 rule: follow healthy eating recommendations 80% of the time and eat what you like without guilt the other 20% of the time. No food is 100% forbidden—have a treat on occasion; it will make a healthy eating plan more livable. This can be true for diabetics so long as you take the precaution of watching the glycemic load of a meal.

RETRAINING OLD EATING HABITS

- Banish unhealthy ingredients from the home and don't buy any more (better to have the occasional dessert after a balanced meal out than to have it as a temptation in the house).
- Stock pantry and refrigerator with healthy balanced choices.
- Plan ahead meal schedule for the week and have healthy choices prepared and on hand. For example, cook extra chicken breast for a quick lunch salad or stir fry the next day, or bake tofu and have it ready in the refrigerator for an afternoon snack.

MINDFUL EATING

- Eat slowly, chew slowly, putting fork down between bites.
- Serve small portions on small plates (12-inch plates are recommended) and do not serve seconds. Wait at least 20 minutes before eating more if you are truly hungry. Eat to satisfaction, but not fullness.
- Savor flavors, textures, aromas, and conversation—enjoy the meal experience, not just the food. Do not read, watch TV, or do any work while eating. Try to make mealtime a peaceful, nurturing experience.
- Recognize and redirect non-hunger eating to better behavior responses. First, evaluate whether the urge to eat is true hunger. Wait at least five minutes before eating to see if the urge passes.

FINAL TIPS

- Follow the 80–20 rule. Remember that you don't have to be “perfect” in your eating habits all of the time.
- Eat a healthy, balanced, but varied diet. There is no cause for boredom when there are so many exciting, healthy recipes, and new foods to try.
- Be kind to yourself, and forgive any lapses.
- Learn to be polite, but firm, in resisting the influence of those who may try to offer or entice you with poor food choices.