
Getting Started

Welcome to *Beyond the Basics*. If you want to learn about food, diabetes and so much more, this resource is for you.

The goal of *Beyond the Basics* is to help you include a variety of foods in your meals and promote good diabetes management. That's because healthy eating is one of the pleasures of life and good nutrition is the cornerstone of diabetes care.

Even if you don't have diabetes, this resource includes a lot of material that can help anyone improve his or her eating habits. In fact, the whole family can benefit!

Beyond the Basics contains many chapters on a wide variety of meal planning and health-related topics. Dip into it, as you need information.

Some important facts about *Beyond the Basics*

- Foods are divided into two categories: foods to “Choose more often” and foods to “Choose less often”. Although all foods may be enjoyed in moderation “Choose more often” items are healthier because they are higher in fibre, higher in vitamins and minerals, and lower in fat.
- *Beyond the Basics* is designed to make it easy for you to include a variety of foods at mealtimes, yet keep carbohydrate intake fairly consistent.
- In food groups containing carbohydrate (Grains & Starches, Fruits, Milk & Alternatives, Other Choices), one serving of each of these groups will contain approximately 15 grams (g) of available carbohydrate.
- If you enjoy multicultural foods, you will find many ethnic choices throughout *Beyond the Basics*.
- All nutrition information has been taken from the most accurate and up-to-date sources available – The Canadian Nutrient File and the United States Department of Agriculture online databases. Information about the glycemic index was obtained from The International Tables of Glycemic Index (2002), www.glycemicindex.com and www.gitesting.com.
- All clinical information has been based upon the *Canadian Diabetes Association 2003 Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Diabetes in Canada*, which consolidate the best science from around the world about the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of the disease and its related complications.
- An extensive section of suggested resources have been included for further information related to many of the chapters included with this resource and can be found on page 141.

A note to those familiar with the *Good Health Eating Guide*

Changes in food labelling, as well as new medications and methods of managing diabetes over the past few years have led to an update of the Canadian Diabetes Association meal planning system the *Good Health Eating Guide*.

If you have been using the *Good Health Eating Guide* to guide your food choices, you will find several differences in *Beyond the Basics*:

- All carbohydrate-containing food groups have been revised to provide approximately 15 g of available carbohydrate per serving. Available carbohydrate is the carbohydrate that remains after the dietary fibre and half the sugar alcohols have been subtracted. You can learn more about this in the section on *Carbohydrate counting* on page 71.
- The food groups have been renamed to better reflect the foods within the group. For example, the “Sugars” group has been renamed “Other Choices” and now includes a variety of sweet and snack foods. The “Starch” group has been renamed “Grains & Starches” to be more similar to *Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating*. The “Protein Foods” group is now called “Meat & Alternatives” which helps describe the wider variety of foods to meet the growing vegetarian and multicultural populations.
- The “Food Choice Values and Symbols” do not apply to *Beyond the Basics* and have been removed from food packages.
- More vegetables are now classified as “free” to encourage you to eat vegetables. They are high in health promoting nutrients and generally low in calories and carbohydrate.

Whether you are new to diabetes or not, Beyond the Basics will help you to plan delicious meals that will help to control your blood glucose and please your taste buds.