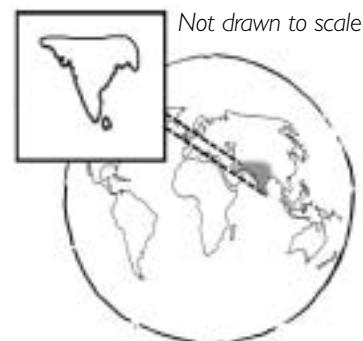


Healthy Eating for South Asians

Healthy eating for diabetes does not mean giving up your traditional South Asian foods. By following some basic healthy eating guidelines you can still enjoy your favourite cultural foods, achieve target blood glucose levels and reduce the risk of complications.



What should my meals look like?

Include a variety of foods at each meal. Traditionally South Asian meals include roti/chapati or rice, vegetables, dahl or meat, and yogourt (dahi). These meals are balanced because they give you a variety of nutrients including carbohydrate, protein and fat.

Carbohydrate

Carbohydrate is an important nutrient that gives the body energy. Foods that contain carbohydrate include:

Grains & Starches	Roti /chapati, rice, bread, cereal, pasta, noodles or stringhoppers, iddlis, dosais, dhokla, potato, yams and corn
Fruits	Any fresh, frozen or canned fruit
Milk & Alternatives	Lassi, yogourt, milk and soy beverage
Other Choices	Sweet foods, desserts and savoury snacks

Carbohydrate foods cause your blood glucose levels to rise, but it is still very important that you eat enough of these foods. Spread carbohydrate foods over the day instead of having large amounts at one meal. You can include many carbohydrate foods in your diet by making some healthy choices:

- Choose whole grain breads and cereals.
- Make roti/chapatis with whole grain flour. Tip: try to make 3 chapatis out of 1 cup of flour, then each chapatti is equal to 2 carbohydrate choices (approximately 30 g of available carbohydrate).
- Enjoy oatmeal or dahlia (cream of wheat) for breakfast.

- Choose fresh fruits. If having canned fruits, choose those with no sugar added. Have fruit for dessert or for snacks.
- Try to have smaller portions of rice. Try brown basmati or brown long grain rice.

Having more fibre (chilka) can help you control your blood glucose, cholesterol and weight. Fibre is found in fruits, vegetables, dahls and pulses as well as whole grain breads, cereals and flours.

Food groups that contain little or no carbohydrate

Vegetables

Most vegetables contain little or no carbohydrate, so they don't have much effect on blood glucose levels. Include more vegetables at meals as they provide many vitamins and minerals. Try to choose brightly coloured vegetables such as peppers, bitter melon, spinach, rapini, okra, eggplant and cauliflower more often.

Meat & Alternatives

Meat & Alternatives such as dahls/pulses, beans (chick peas, kidney beans), eggs, cheese, fish, chicken, beef, tofu/soy products and paneer provide protein. Protein is an important nutrient for repairing the muscle and body tissues. Protein foods are also good sources of minerals like iron. Although these foods will have little effect on your blood glucose levels, protein foods can be high in fat. Therefore, it is important to watch portion sizes of protein foods especially meats. An appropriate portion size for meat is the size of the palm of your hand. It is also important to make healthy choices of protein foods for heart health and healthy weight. For example:

- Try to choose leaner meats with less visible white fat.
- Take the skin off chicken and poultry.
- Try including fish at least two times a week, but don't fry fish.
- Include more dahl/pulses or legumes like rajma or chole in your diet as a source of protein.
- Try using firm tofu instead of paneer in dishes such as palak paneer and matar paneer. Soya is good alternative protein choice, especially for vegetarians.
- If using paneer, use low fat paneer.
- If cholesterol is high, limit meat and alternatives to 6 ounces (2 palms of the hand size servings) per day. (Refer to *The Plate Method* and *The Handy Portion Guide* on page 93.)

Fats

Fat is found in oils used in cooking, but also in many other processed and baked foods like cookies, crackers, chips, snack mixes and fried foods. Fats do not raise blood glucose, but they increase cholesterol and weight. It is important to choose healthier fats, such as those that are liquid at room temperature. Examples of healthier fats include vegetable oils such as canola oil, olive oil, soybean oil and corn oil. One teaspoon of oil per person for each meal is an appropriate portion size. Coconut and palm oil contain fats that can raise cholesterol, and therefore should be avoided. Some healthy tips for fats include: