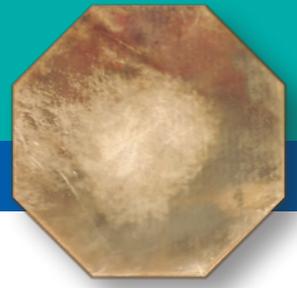




# LIVING A BALANCED LIFE WITH DIABETES:

Dealing with Stress and Making Healthy Food Choices



## DIABETES, STRESS, AND HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

Diabetes is very common among American Indians and Alaska Natives. Yet, for most people, diabetes is only one of the many things in their lives that they have to worry about. At times, work, school, family issues, or other things in life can also be hard to manage.

Different people handle stress in different ways. Some people turn to food as a way to deal with their feelings. Some people may eat too much when they feel down or stressed. They may turn to high-calorie foods like fast food, ice cream, cake, or other snack foods to feel better.

Other people who are stressed may not have a good appetite. They may avoid food or not eat a lot.

Eating too much or not eating enough as a way of dealing with stress can make it hard for you to take care of yourself and your diabetes. Stress and some foods, like white rice, white bread, cookies, pies, or cake, can all raise your blood sugar level. Not eating enough food can cause low blood sugar. If you have diabetes, it is important that you make healthy food choices to keep your blood sugar levels under control. Be aware of the times when you feel down and the kinds of foods you eat when you are stressed. If you find that you eat high-calorie foods when you are feeling down, try having healthy foods around the house to snack on. Healthy snacks include non-fat/no sugar ice cream, whole wheat bread or crackers, low-fat cheese, or half a banana.

## TIPS TO HANDLE STRESS

### When you feel stressed:

- Talk with an elder about your concerns.
- Be with others that you have fun with.
- Do something nice for someone else.
- Take a nature walk.
- Learn a new activity, like fishing, horseback riding, or some other things that you might enjoy doing with others.

Be sure to also talk to your health care team (diabetes educator, dietitian, doctor, nurse, psychologist, or social worker), your spiritual counselor, or some other person that you trust. They can help you get the support you need.

## Make Healthy Food Choices

If you have diabetes, it is important to eat healthy foods to help keep your blood sugar levels under control. Make healthy food choices:

- Eat a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Choose whole grain foods—whole wheat bread and crackers, oatmeal, brown rice, and cereals.
- Limit the amount of solid fats and sugars when cooking or eating by trimming fat from meat, using less butter or margarine, and using less sugar.
- Make your meals lighter by using nonfat or low-fat milk, cheese, or mayonnaise. Use cooking spray instead of oil.
- Eat a healthy snack between meals.
- Choose water to drink.



National Diabetes Education Program

A program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## LEARN MORE ABOUT DIABETES:

### NIH National Diabetes Education Program

1-888-693-NDEP (6337)

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-communication-programs/ndep/pages/index.aspx>

<https://ndep.nih.gov/resources/diabetes-healthsense/>

### CDC National Diabetes Education Program

1-800-232-4636

<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep/people-with-diabetes/index.html>

### Indian Health Service

Eating Healthy

<https://ndep.nih.gov/resources/diabetes-healthsense/>

### American Diabetes Association

1-800-DIABETES (342-2383)

[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

### National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

[www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov)

1-800-860-8747

## LEARN MORE ABOUT DIABETES EDUCATORS NEAR YOU:

### American Association of Diabetes Educators

1-800-338-DMED (3633)

<https://www.diabeteseducator.org/>

## LEARN MORE ABOUT NUTRITION AND HEALTHY EATING:

### American Dietetic Association

1-800-877-1600

<http://www.eatright.org/>

### CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity website

[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/publicat.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/publicat.htm)

### MyPyramid Plan

<http://www.foodpyramid.com/mypyramid/>



Ann Bullock, MD, Indian Health Service, and Lemyra DeBruyn, PhD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, reviewed this material for technical accuracy. February 2017

## National Diabetes Education Program

For more information call 1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

TTY 1-888-232-6348 or visit [www.cdc.gov/info](http://www.cdc.gov/info)

To order resources, visit [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep)

