

# HEALTHY NUTRITION

## FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

People are often overwhelmed by the nutrition advice that seems to bombard us every day. It's not always easy to find the right information for managing diabetes, especially when recommendations conflict with one another. We're here to help! The following recommendations offer nutrition advice based on the latest research.

In general, it is beneficial to reduce the amount of carbohydrates in your diet and choose high-quality carbohydrate sources. The recommendations and tips included here are for creating a healthy and balanced diet. The plan includes an example week, but leaves room to customize targeted quantity recommendations, which depend on different factors like body size, age and activity.

**We hope with some guidance, you can sort through the dietary noise and find a successful and enjoyable journey through food!**

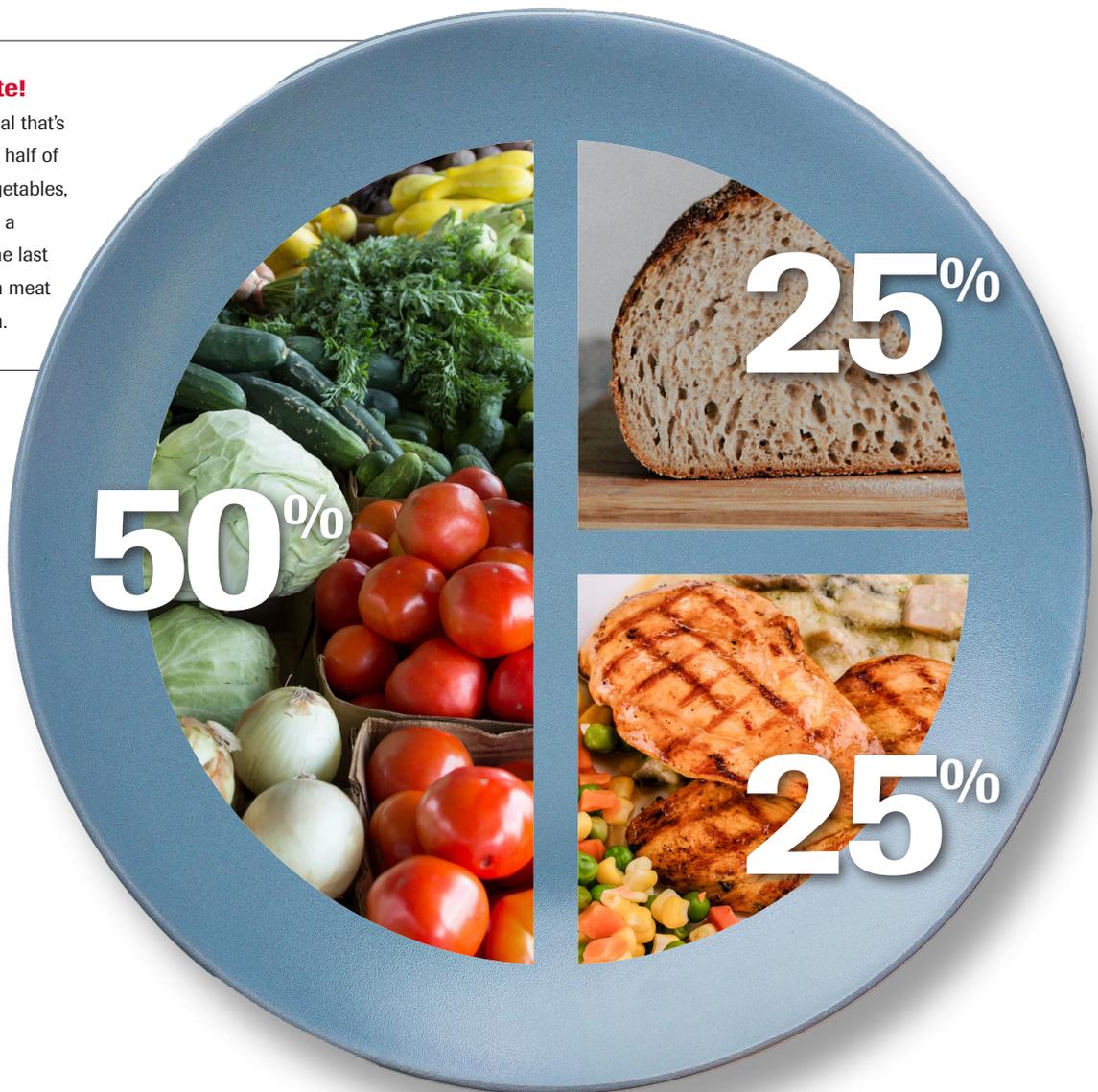


**AT A GLANCE**

**FOOD/DRINK  
RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Plan your plate!**

For a balanced meal that's easy on sugars, fill half of your plate with vegetables, a quarter of it with a whole grain and the last quarter with a lean meat like grilled chicken.



**AT A GLANCE FOOD/DRINK RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**DRINKS**

Quench your thirst throughout the day with unlimited water (still or sparkling), tea or black coffee. Keep diet or sugar-free drinks to a minimum, and avoid sugary drinks like regular soda pop, energy drinks or juice.

**VEGETABLES AND FRUIT**

Enjoy unlimited non-starchy vegetables daily by keeping half of your plate full of veggies at each meal, and choose 1-2 portions of fruit per day. Berries are best!

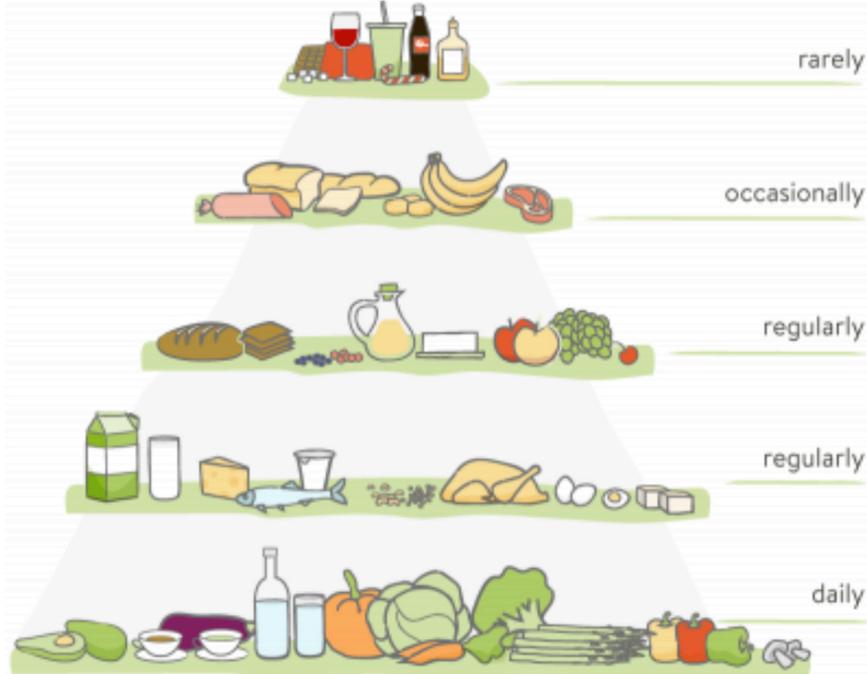
**GRAINS, CEREALS AND STARCHY VEGETABLES**

Choose whole grains (whole-grain bread, brown rice, steel-cut oats) over refined grains (white bread, white rice, quick-cook oats). Choose smaller portions so these only comprise a quarter of your plate at each meal. The more physical activity you engage in, the bigger your portion can be! Keep in mind that potatoes, corn and peas are all considered starches.

**PROTEIN-RICH FOODS**

Choose vegetable protein sources most often, like legumes, nuts, seeds, tofu and other soy products. Other protein options throughout your week may include:

- 1-2 oz. of nuts/seeds or nut/seed butter (almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, etc.) daily
- Legumes (beans, lentils) several times per week
- Fatty fish (salmon, herring) 1-2 times per week
- Choosing full-fat and fermented dairy products over non-fat
- Selecting eggs and poultry (chicken, turkey) more often than red meat
- Limiting processed meats like salami, bacon and sausage



**FATS**

Choose olive, canola and flaxseed oils and butter over heavily processed oils like sunflower and soybean. Choose avocados, nuts and seeds, and avoid trans fats like partially hydrogenated oils.

**SUGAR, SWEETS AND SWEETENERS**

Limit these to six teaspoons (25g) of added sugar per day. This also applies to natural sweeteners like honey, agave and maple syrup. If you prefer alternative sweeteners like stevia, monk fruit, xylitol and erythritol, stick with small portions. Avoid high-fructose corn syrup and artificial sweeteners like aspartame, saccharin or sucralose.

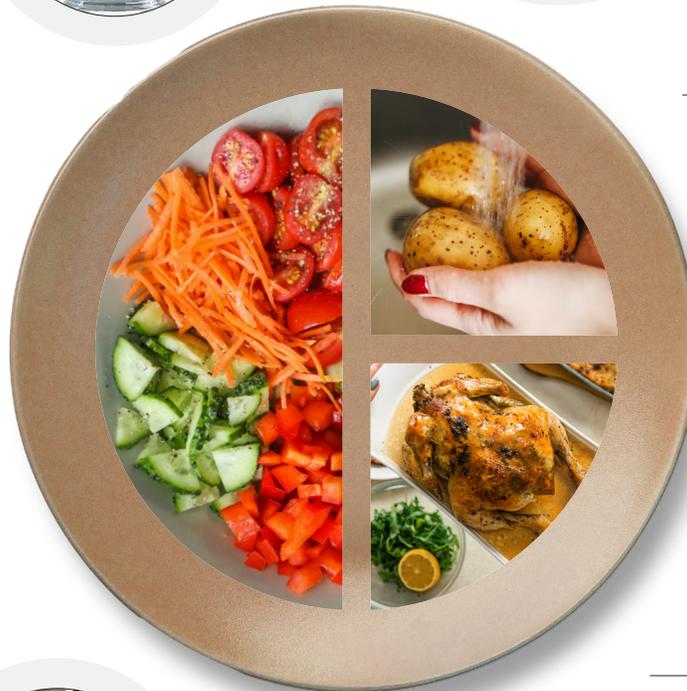
# QUANTITIES AND PORTION SIZES

Your body likes to stay well hydrated, so keep in mind the 8 x 8 rule! **Eight ounces of water eight times a day.**



Eat a small snack between meals when hungry. One portion is about **1 handful**. Examples: nuts, yogurt with fresh fruits.

Vegetables, legumes and herbs can make up at least **1/3 - 1/2 of your plate**. Fresh and frozen are equally nutritious. Eat as much as you want!



Whole grains and potatoes are good carb sources. Keep them to about **1/4 of your plate**.

Good quality protein sources can make up about **1/4 - 1/3 of your plate**. This includes meat, fish, cheese and eggs.

Seeds, nuts and high-quality oils provide essential fatty acids and help you feel full.



# EXAMPLE PLAN FOR ONE WEEK

## MONDAY

**Breakfast** Steel-cut oats with nuts and berries

**Lunch** Tuna salad sandwich with side salad

**Snack** Apple with nut butter

**Dinner** Greek salad with feta cheese and orzo

## TUESDAY

**Breakfast** Fried eggs on whole-grain toast

**Lunch** Vegetable, cashew and chickpea curry

**Snack** Mandarins and almonds

**Dinner** Chicken soup with vegetables

## WEDNESDAY

**Breakfast** Egg omelet with feta cheese, spinach and chives, side of berries

**Lunch** Chicken thighs stewed in white wine with mixed vegetables

**Snack** Turkey, cucumber and avocado roll-ups

**Dinner** Whole-wheat grilled cheese and mixed salad

## THURSDAY

**Breakfast** Steel-cut oats with peanut butter and cinnamon

**Lunch** Mushroom omelet with side salad

**Snack** Bell peppers and hummus

**Dinner** Carne asada "burrito bowl" salad

## FRIDAY

**Breakfast** Cottage cheese with fresh fruit and walnuts

**Lunch** Baked salmon with asparagus and red potatoes

**Snack** A few squares of 70% dark chocolate

**Dinner** Stewed white beans mixed with grilled vegetables and olives topped with parmesan cheese

## SATURDAY

**Breakfast** Whole-grain toast with salmon and avocado

**Lunch** Hamburger lettuce wrap with tomato, small apple

**Snack** Berries and yogurt

**Dinner** Fried brown rice and riced cauliflower mixed with spring vegetables and tofu

## SUNDAY

**Breakfast** Almond flour pancakes with berries

**Lunch** Lentil pasta with eggplant, zucchini bell peppers and pesto

**Snack** String cheese and melon

**Dinner** Baked balsamic chicken with tomatoes, basil and mozzarella salad



Taking a walk, even **just 10 minutes after a meal** can help curb the post-meal blood sugar spikes. Leave time for movement after each meal so you aren't reaching for a sugar-laden treat.

# MORE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

## **SLEEP**

Try to get 7-9 hours per night. Sleep deprivation occurs when you get less than six hours over time. Be sure to turn off blue-light emitting electronics like cell phones, computers and TV at least an hour before bed, and keep your room cool and dark for the best quality sleep.

## **GET OUTSIDE**

Getting outside for 30 30 minutes each day has proven health benefits. Try strolling through a park or along a road with trees and flowers, eat lunch outside rather than at your desk and open a window for some fresh air.

## **GET MOVING**

Taking a walk just 10 minutes after a meal can help curb the post-meal blood sugar spikes. Find ways to integrate movement into everyday life: Take the stairs over the elevator, park your car far away from the store entrance

or arrange to go for a walk with friends after work. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity per week (walking, strength training, yoga, biking) and avoid sitting for long periods of time. Try to get up at least every 30 minutes. Set a timer on your phone or get up during TV commercials to walk in place or do squats!

## **REDUCE STRESS**

Incorporate 10 minutes of relaxation or mindfulness exercises like meditation each day. Sleep 7-9 hours per night (it's so important, we mention it twice!) and try breathing exercises during stressful or irritating situations. Do this by counting to four with your inhale, then four with your exhale.

## **TOBACCO**

Give up smoking, vaping and chewing tobacco. If you don't smoke, don't start!



# DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS IN DETAIL

## DRINKS

### COFFEE

- Black coffee contains no carbs, so you shouldn't see much of an effect on your blood sugar. However, caffeine can cause hormone shifts that do increase your blood sugar, so check after your cuppa to see if this is the case for you.
- If you are hungry before meal time, try drinking a cup of black coffee instead of eating a snack. Coffee can help curb your appetite.\*
- Instead of dessert, treat yourself to a decaf espresso or cappuccino.\*

### TEA

- Black, green, white and herbal teas are high in antioxidants that protect against many diseases. Prepare your own hot or iced tea anytime during the day and use your choice of sweetener.\*
- As with coffee, try drinking a large cup of hot or iced tea if you feel hungry between meals.

*\*Consider stopping your caffeine consumption by noon so you can sleep well at night!*

### FRUIT JUICES

- Even fresh fruit juices are high in sugar and are no healthier than packaged foods. Try a diluted juice "spritzer" (1 part juice to 5 parts water) if you crave something fruity to drink.
- Choose whole fruit over juice, since chewing improves satiety and the fiber can help delay the rise in blood sugar. Fiber also provides great benefits for gut health and cholesterol.

### SUGAR-SWEETENED DRINKS

- Avoid sugary drinks like soda pop, energy drinks and sports drinks. The sugar content in these products raises blood sugar rapidly and encourages fatty liver and insulin resistance.

### DIET DRINKS

- We advise against diet drinks because the bacteria in our intestines have been shown to react negatively to the artificial sweeteners (listed later in this document), which increases the risk for insulin resistance and weight gain.
- Better choices include plain, still or sparkling water or water flavored with lemon juice, ginger or fruit.

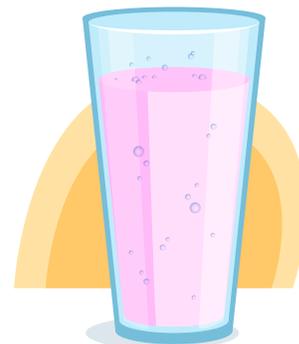
### Curb hunger between meals

with a cup of black coffee instead of that cupcake. You can also replace desserts with a decaf espresso or cappuccino!



### Even fresh fruit juices are still high in sugar.

Try a fruit spritzer by mixing 1 part juice to 5 parts sparkling water.



## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

- Alcoholic beverages contain a lot of “empty” calories, meaning they have no nutritional value (gram for gram, it’s almost as much as fat) and stimulate your appetite – usually not for veggies!
- That doesn’t mean you can’t enjoy a drink occasionally. If you choose to drink, dry wines are a better option over sweet wines. Light beer has significantly fewer carbohydrates and calories. While hard liquor has no sugar, mixers like juice and soda are packed with it — so be mindful of your mixer. It is recommended that women limit to one drink per day and men two drinks per day.



## VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

- A diet full of plants, vegetables in particular, helps to reduce weight and achieve better blood glucose control. Eat as many veggies as you like!
- Replace your bread or fried appetizer with a salad or roasted vegetable starter.
- If you don’t like veggies, or struggle to eat enough, try mixing half the amount of starch (pasta, rice, etc.) with a vegetable pasta or rice (e.g. zucchini noodles or cauliflower rice.)
- Choose whole fruit as a snack or an accompaniment to a meal.
- Frozen veggies and fruits are just as nutritious as fresh. Frozen produce is especially helpful in months when fresh produce is hard to come by. Try to avoid canned produce, as they typically contain large amounts of added sugars and salt.

### LEGUMES

- Legumes (peas, beans and lentils) are recommended several times a week as a good source of protein and fiber, which can improve blood lipid levels and help slow the rise of blood sugar levels.

- Legumes can be eaten as a meat substitute (try lentil sloppy joes or chickpea “tuna” salad!).
- If you’re concerned about intestinal gas or flatulence caused by legumes, know that regular consumption will significantly reduce these symptoms after just a few days or weeks. If you never eat legumes, start slowly and build your way up. Soaking your raw beans overnight or rinsing canned beans can also help with intestinal gas.

### POTATOES

- Potatoes increase blood sugar rapidly due to their high starch content.
- The cooking method matters: baked, roasted and steamed potatoes increase blood sugar more slowly than mashed and fried potatoes. Be sure to eat the peel for fiber!
- The type of potato matters, too. Red new potatoes, yukon gold, purple and sweet potatoes will increase blood sugar more slowly than conventional russets.
- Just like with pasta, try mixing in some vegetables, like making potato salad with cucumber or radish. This decreases the starchy portion without compromising on flavor.



## GRAINS

- Grains that are minimally processed, meaning they haven't been crushed or ground (such as steel-cut oats), cause blood sugar to rise much more slowly and keep you feeling full for longer than quick grains.
- Whole grains and whole-wheat flours raise blood sugar as quickly as white flour, but offer higher mineral and fiber levels than white flour, so it is always a better choice.
- The tougher the rice grain (like brown or red rice), the lower the effect on the blood sugar level. Choose natural rice over instant rice — it should take a little while to cook it!
- Fresh sourdough breads are prepared with the help of wild yeast and cause blood sugar to rise more slowly. They are preferred over typical store-bought bread. You can often find fresh sourdough bread at the supermarket or a local bakery.
- Swap your typical cracker for whole-grain or rye crackers. Even better, try crackers made with only nuts and seeds!
- Bean and lentil pastas (find them in the pasta aisle) increase blood sugar much more slowly than traditional pasta.
- If your blood sugar rises too far above your target within 1.5 - 2 hours after eating, consider reducing the portion of grains or replace it with vegetables or a protein source.

## DAIRY PRODUCTS AND CHEESE

- Don't worry about the fat content here. Recent studies show full-fat dairy products are good for your metabolism (and they taste delicious.) There's no need to eat non-fat or low-fat milk, yogurt or cheese. Hooray!
- Pay attention to the sugar. Milk has natural sugar, which is okay in small amounts, but if you see "sugar" or any of its other nicknames ("cane sugar," "corn syrup," etc.) on the label, it's best to put it back on the shelf.
- Choose whole or 2% white milk over flavored milks. Even better milk options are fermented milks like plain kefir and sour milk, as they have much less sugar and a dose of healthy bacteria.
- Milk alternatives, like almond and soy milk, are great milk replacements for dairy allergies or lactose intolerance as long as they are labeled "unsweetened."
- Some yogurts and milk "drinks" contain more sugar than a piece of cake! Add some fruit (like berries) to sweeten plain yogurt. If you prefer it a bit sweeter, you can try a drop of liquid stevia or a small teaspoon of honey.
- Cheese has no sugar or carbohydrates because the cheese-making process leaves the sugar in the by-product (which is buttermilk!). Consider cheese a high-fat protein source, rather than a dairy source, when considering its effect on blood sugar.



## MEAT AND FISH

- Fish is an ideal source of protein due to its balanced nutrient content. Wild-caught fish from a source local to you is typically the healthiest option!
- Long-chain, omega-3 fatty acids are high in fatty fish like salmon, sardines, mackerel and herring. They have strong anti-inflammatory effects on the body. Regular intake of omega-3 fatty acids can improve the effect of insulin and blood lipids.
- Poultry, eggs, dairy products, legumes, tofu and nuts are also great sources of protein that are associated with health benefits.
- Large portions and frequent intake of red meat is associated with numerous cancers, heart disease and insulin resistance, so choose this less often.
- Avoid highly processed meat like deli meat, bologna, salami and sausages as much as possible. Instead, try cold-roasted or grilled chicken or steak.
- Add flavor to sandwiches or cooked meats by adding herbs, spices, cheese or spreads like hummus, mustard or olive tapenade.

## EGGS

- Restricting eggs, specifically egg yolk, is no longer no longer the recommendation from most dieticians. Current research shows that cholesterol from our diet does not greatly influence the cholesterol in our blood.
- Like meat and fish, eggs have no carbohydrates and offer a good balance of protein and fat. If you replace a slice

of bread with an egg at breakfast, you will likely feel more satiated and see your post-meal blood sugars decrease.

- Eggs are great at all meals and snacks. An omelet with herbs and vegetables can be prepared quickly as the start of any meal.

## FATS AND OILS

- Butter from grass-fed (pasture-raised) animals contains higher amounts of beneficial omega-3 fatty acids, and improves the taste even more!
- Butter spreads made with canola, olive and coconut oils are good options as well.
- Cold-pressed, extra virgin olive oil and walnut oil are excellent fat choices due to the high antioxidant content, but should not be used for cooking due to their low smoking point. This is the temperature at which the oil stops shimmering and begins smoking.
- Canola, avocado and refined coconut oils are ideal for cooking because they have a neutral taste and a high smoking point, which means they can be heated to a high temperature safely.

## NUTS AND SEEDS

- Nuts and seeds are great for your heart health! It's recommended to eat 1-2 oz. (a scant palmful) daily for the biggest benefits.
- Small portions of nuts and seeds will hardly increase blood sugar level, as they are very low in carbohydrates. These make a great snack or dessert. Try unsalted, low-sodium, raw or roasted to see which flavor you prefer.



## SWEETS AND SNACKS

- Sweet, salty and crunchy foods can be addictive, so it's important to keep your portion size in check. Purchase pre-portioned snacks, or portion out large bags into small containers at home.
- Choose high-quality snacks and sweets; you'll feel more satisfied with a smaller portion!
- If you find yourself too tempted, keep sweets and snacks out of the house. That way, the extra effort of traveling stands between you and an unhealthy treat!
- Dark chocolate made with at least 70% cocoa has half as much sugar as milk chocolate, but it contains useful anti-inflammatory polyphenols! Try a few squares of a 70% chocolate bar or homemade hot chocolate with dark cocoa powder sweetened with liquid stevia for a sweet treat.
- Yogurt with berries is a great snack if you're looking for an ice cream alternative.
- In home-baked goods, try using 1/3 less sugar than specified in the recipe (for example, if it calls for 1 cup sugar, use 2/3 cup). You can also swap out half of the flour for almond or coconut flour to decrease the carbohydrate content and boost flavor.

## SWEETENERS AND SUGAR

- Stevia and monk fruit sweeteners do not affect blood sugar at all! They come in powder or liquid form. Just be careful with the portion size, as a little goes a long way — they are much sweeter than sugar. To start, try one drop of stevia in your cup of coffee.
- Xylitol and erythritol are also suitable sweeteners. These are sugar alcohols that increase blood sugar minimally. They can cause an upset stomach and gas in some individuals, so start with a small portion.
- Avoid artificial sweeteners such as acesulfame, neotame, saccharin, aspartame, sucralose and cyclamate. These sweeteners have a negative effect on the good bacteria in your gut. Keeping gut bacteria healthy is important for diabetes management, inflammation and immunity!
- Table or white sugar contains high amounts of sugar called fructose. When consumed in larger quantities, like in sweets and sugary drinks, fructose is transported directly to the liver, where it is converted into fat. This accumulates in the liver and makes us more insulin resistant. Small amounts of fructose, like the levels in fruit, do not cause this problem.
- Avoid products that list high-fructose syrup as one of the ingredients.



### CUT SWEETS WITH A SUGAR SWAP!

When baking at home, try using **1/3 less sugar** than specified in the recipe. You can also swap out half of the flour for **almond** or **coconut flour** to decrease the carb content and boost flavor.