

Take the Healthy Eating Challenge

Type 2 diabetes is a serious health concern in America, impacting more than 29 million people. In addition, more than 86 million people have prediabetes, which increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Maintaining a healthy diet is one way to prevent and control type 2 diabetes, and this month's tool offers four ways to eat right.

How it works

Each week, participants focus on a different part of a healthy diet:

- Smaller portions
- Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- No sugary drinks

The Healthy Eating Challenge calendar lists these healthy habits along with tips for practicing them. Participants review the healthy habits, set goals, and use the calendar to track their progress. At the end of the month, they answer the reflective questions to reinforce the healthy eating habits encouraged in the tool.

Variations and additions

Additional information on diabetes prevention can be provided during a lunch and learn session. A presentation by a health coach or health care practitioner could provide information on lifestyle changes, exercise, weight loss, or other factors that can help prevent type 2 diabetes. Other options are presentations on healthy snacking, or healthy eating on the road.

You may also want to encourage people to participate in the challenge by offering food or beverages which support the weekly goals. For example, you could provide:

- Pre-portioned healthy snacks
- Fresh fruit or vegetables
- Low-sugar oatmeal packets or portions of whole grain cereals
- Bottled water

Establish rewards

Employees may be more likely to take part in the Healthy Eating Challenge if they are rewarded for doing so. Those who complete the challenge can fill out the signature page and turn it in for a chance to win a prize. Prizes could include a grocery store gift card, a fruit basket, water bottles, or shares in a local community supported agriculture program.



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A healthy diet is one way to prevent and control type 2 diabetes, and this month's tool focuses on four ways to eat right.

Before the challenge begins, look over the weekly healthy habits and the tips provided. Challenge yourself by deciding how often you are going to try to practice that healthy habit during the week. If you aim to practice it at each meal, your goal would be 21. During the week, put that healthy habit into practice as often as you can. When the week is over, write your total in the space provided. After completing the healthy eating challenge, consider the reflective questions below the chart.

Week	Healthy Habit	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
1 Goal: _____ Weekly Total: _____	Take smaller portions Start your meal with smaller portions, or cut a large portion in two and save half for your next meal. Use a small plate and pause between bites to make yourself more aware of the feeling of fullness. Keep meat portions to about 3 ounces (about the size of your palm). <i>Place a check on a line for each meal you ate smaller portions.</i>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
2 Goal: _____ Weekly Total: _____	Fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables Aim to eat three or four half-cup servings of fruit and four or five half-cup servings of vegetables each day. Choose a variety of colorful fresh or frozen vegetables, and when snacking try a vegetable medley (such as carrots, peas, beans, cauliflower, and cheery tomatoes). Avoid fried vegetables, or vegetables with butter or cream sauce. <i>Place a check on a line for each meal you filled half your plate with fruits and vegetables.</i>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

<p>3</p> <p>Goal: _____</p> <p>Weekly Total: _____</p>	<p>Choose whole grains</p> <p>Select brown rice, whole grain bread, whole wheat pasta, and whole grain cereals. Aim for six to eight servings each day. (A serving is one slice of bread, ½ cup of noodles or rice, or 1 cup of dry cereal.) Avoid pastries, chips, doughnuts, and sugary cereal.</p> <p><i>Place a check on a line for each meal you chose whole grains.</i></p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Goal: _____</p> <p>Weekly Total: _____</p>	<p>Avoid sugary drinks</p> <p>Sugary drinks such as soda and fruit juice can lead to weight gain and a higher risk of type 2 diabetes. Instead, try water, unsweetened tea, skim milk, or coffee (without sugar and cream).</p> <p><i>Place a check on a line for each meal you avoided sugary drinks.</i></p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Reflective Questions

Did you meet your goal each week? _____

If not, what kept you from achieving it? _____

How can you avoid these obstacles? _____

If you met your goals, what helped you achieve success? _____

Which healthy habits do you plan to continue to practice? _____

Why? _____

Healthy Eating Challenge Signature Page

I completed the Healthy Eating Challenge on _____ (Date)

Name: _____

Signature: _____

