People diagnosed with diabetes or told that they have prediabetes can eat the same foods as the rest of the family. Choosing foods that you enjoy as well as learning to make healthier choices are all great ways to help keep blood sugar levels on target. You may think that because you have diabetes you need to stay away from starchy foods or sweets. It is not what you eat but rather how much of it you eat. It is the amount that counts! No foods are off limits to people with diabetes anymore. Eating sugary foods use to make people with diabetes feel guilty or blamed for causing diabetes.

People with diabetes often even eliminate certain fresh fruits and vegetables like beets or carrots from their diet because they believe these vegetables cause blood sugar to rise. It is normal for blood sugar to rise after eating. All carbohydrates, such as milk, fruit and bread raise blood sugar. But it has always been the amount that needs to be considered when you make your plate. In order to be able to include all the foods you enjoy in your meal plan a visit to a Registered Dietitian (RD) can help you with your diabetes management.

Sometimes people with diabetes ask for a diabetic diet or a list of foods that they can or cannot eat. There are no one-size fits all diabetic diets. An RD can work with you to create a meal plan.

People with diabetes or pre diabetes have the same nutritional needs as everyone else. Consuming well-balanced meals and snacks at about the same time each day may help everyone to improve overall health. Eating healthy foods in appropriate amounts plays a key role in weight control and can help to improve diabetes management.

Good nutrition and meal management also includes eating a variety of foods.
Summer and Fall are seasons to be taken advantage of with the bounty of the many harvests of fruits and vegetables available right here on Long Island. We have farm stands and farmers markets bursting with their homegrown specialties to be enjoyed by all, including those with diabetes or pre diabetes.

**Here are some things to keep in mind:**

- **Eat a wide variety of foods, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables.**
- **Eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables a day.**
- **Choose vegetables such as broccoli, spinach and dark green leafy lettuce that have lots of nutrients and are low in calories and carbohydrates. Remember to wash fresh produce under cool running tap water before eating.**
- **Carbohydrates count.** The foods that are high in carbohydrates include breads, cereals, rice, potatoes, fruits, juices, milk, yogurt, corn, peas and sweets. These foods will raise blood sugar levels but are not to be excluded from your diet. For most people about 3 to 4 carbohydrate selections at each meal is about right. You will need to keep track of your total servings and, of course, monitor your blood sugar levels as directed by your health care provider and dietitian.
- **An easy way to make your food choices is to think about how you divide the space on your plate - ½ for vegetables, ¼ for whole grains or starchy foods, and ¼ for lean meat, chicken or fish. Have a small piece of fruit and a glass of skim milk or yogurt on the side.**
- **Eat more whole grains, and dried beans and lentils too.**
- **Foods like fruit, vegetables, and whole grains give you fiber and vitamins. You can have larger portions of non-starchy vegetables like celery, tomatoes, carrots, lettuce and cucumbers.**

- **Choose whole fruit instead of fruit juice.**
- **Use oils, fat and butter sparingly.**
- **If you are overweight enroll in a weight management series of classes.**
- **Enroll in an education class or speak with your doctor about a referral to a Registered Dietician. Check out [www.longislanddiabetes.org](http://www.longislanddiabetes.org) to locate a diabetes education program or support group in your area.**
- **Use the summer and fall season to become more active. Walk more. Don’t look for the closest parking space at your next stop today. Look for the one that is just a bit further away and go for it.**
- **Enjoy your farm fresh fruits and vegetables!**

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County is committed to helping families and individuals succeed by providing educational programs and resources. Our Family Health and Wellness Program offers Community Food and Nutrition Education Programs, Diabetes Education, Parent Education Programs, Professional Training Programs, Healthy Living & Worksite Wellness Programs. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County welcomes you to call Susan Wilk at 631-727-7850 ext. 385 for additional diabetes and diabetes prevention information.

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Please contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County office if you have any special needs.