

Upgrade Your Diabetic Diet with The 25/75 Method [Plus a Free Diet PDF!]

Last Updated on May 30, 2024 by [Kari Garner, MS RDN LD CDCES](#)

Are you confused while trying to learn about diabetes & nutrition? Understanding how food can affect your blood sugars can be difficult; there is a lot of misinformation out there!

As a [registered dietitian and diabetes educator](#), I understand how hard it is. I talk to patients about a diabetic diet every day. You need something simple to follow that gets your diet on track quickly.

To help you navigate this essential aspect of diabetes management, I've created a diabetic diet PDF (E-book) called [The 25/75 method](#). The E-book & article below are designed to provide you with simple guidance, practical tips, and meal ideas to get you started today!

The 25/75 Method

[The 25/75 Method](#) is an easy way to learn about a diabetic/ consistent carbohydrate diet, simply and quickly. It will work well for people with diabetes/prediabetes who want to lower their blood sugars and learn how to prevent the progression of diabetes.

It can be confusing and frustrating to learn about and start a diet for diabetes. Use [The 25/75 Method](#) to decrease the frustration today!

[Free Summary of The 25/75 Method & more information](#). It includes:

- A link for 10% off your purchase
- A summary of The 25/75 Method & framework
- A little about the me, Kari Garner, the author

[The 25/75 Method](#) includes:

- An easy-to-follow visual of what your plate should look like at meals
- Food lists to help you make quick decisions about meals

- Explanation of foods that increase/ decrease your blood sugar
- Sample Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner ideas

If you are ready to get started with The 25/75 Method, choose one of the options below:

[Digital Copy](#)

[Digital Copy + Printed Booklet](#)

Not ready to purchase yet? Download a PDF of this article to get started. Keep reading for helpful tips and information. Plus, learn my **#1 rule** for a diabetes-friendly diet below!

Understanding Diabetes and the Role of Diet

Pre-diabetes

Pre-diabetes is like a warning sign from your body. It means that your blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes yet.

Normally, your body turns the food you eat into sugar, which gives you energy. To use this sugar, your body needs a hormone called insulin. Think of insulin as a key that unlocks your cell doors to let the sugar in from your bloodstream.

When you have pre-diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or doesn't use it well, so more sugar stays in your blood.

Having pre-diabetes doesn't mean you'll definitely get diabetes, but it does mean you're at a higher risk. I have helped many patients move their blood sugars from the pre-diabetic range back into the "non-diabetic" range.

Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a condition where your body has trouble using sugar properly. With type 2 diabetes, two things can go wrong:

1. **Your body doesn't make enough insulin:** This means there aren't enough keys to open the cell doors for the sugar.
2. **Your body doesn't use insulin well (insulin resistance):** This means even if you have enough keys, the locks are rusty and hard to open, so sugar can't get into the cells easily.

When this happens, sugar builds up in your blood instead of being used for energy. High blood sugar levels can cause major problems for your heart, kidneys, eyes, hands, feet and other parts of your body.

I explain to my patients that when your A1c is over 7%, silent, irreversible damage to these body parts is happening. The good news is that there are MANY things you can do each day to have great blood sugars. You can live a long, healthy life after a diabetes diagnosis.

What causes pre- and type 2 diabetes?

People can get type 2 diabetes due to several factors, including:

- **Genetics:** If your family members have diabetes, you are more likely to get it.
- **Lifestyle:** Eating unhealthy foods regularly, not getting enough exercise, and being overweight can increase your risk.

The good news is that by making healthy choices—like eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and sometimes losing weight or taking medication—you can manage type 2 diabetes without any of the scary consequences of diabetes.

Diet & Diabetes Management

Your diet can make an enormous impact on your blood sugars. Every single thing you choose to eat will either help or hurt your numbers.

Here are some basic tips:

- You don't have to be perfect! A good diet 80-90% of the time is enough to get your blood sugars in a safe, healthy range.
- Monitor your fasting blood sugars, before breakfast each day.
 - Your goal is 80-130 mg/dL before you eat.
- All food choices make a difference! Look at EVERYTHING
 - Meals
 - Snacks
 - Condiments
 - Alcohol
 - Beverages

And... this brings me to my one and only rule...

My #1 Rule

The only rule that I have is: **DON'T DRINK SUGARY BEVERAGES!**

Drinks with sugar increase blood sugars VERY quickly and make keeping your diabetes under control almost impossible.

Some questions I get with this rule are:

- Does that include soda/pop?
 - Yes, drink “diet” or “zero” sodas. Aim for caffeine free most of the time.
- I don't like sugar substitutes!
 - That's ok! Try drinks like seltzer or mineral water. Or flavor your water with lemons, limes or cucumbers.
 - Also, there are hundreds of sugar-free drinks on the market, with different types of sweeteners. Keep trying until you find something that you like, or at least tolerate!
- I like (*insert name of your favorite sugary drink here*). What should I choose instead?
 - Honestly, I find that people have an easier time going to a sugar free beverage that is not the diet version of their favorite. For example:
 - Coke is your favorite. Instead of trying Diet Coke or Coke Zero, try Diet Dr. Pepper or Sprite Zero instead.

Key Components of a Diabetic Diet

Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates, or carbs for short, are one of the main types of nutrients in our food, and they are a major source of energy for our bodies. Think of carbs as fuel for your body, similar to how gasoline fuels a car.

Simple Carbs: These are like fast fuel. They are broken down quickly by your body for energy. Because they break down fast, they give you a quick burst of energy & also make your blood sugar spike quickly.

This also means your blood sugar can drop quickly afterward, sometimes leaving you feeling tired or hungry again soon. Examples of simple carbs are:

- Sugar
- Candy
- Desserts (baked goods, cakes, cookies and pastries)
- Snack foods (crackers, pretzels and chips)
- Sugary Drinks

- White bread
- White rice
- Pasta

Complex Carbs: These are like the slow, steady fuel. They take longer to break down because of the types of sugars & fiber in them. Since they take longer to digest, they provide a more steady and long-lasting energy and make your blood sugar rise more slowly.

- Whole grains
 - brown rice
 - whole wheat bread
 - Whole grain pasta
- Beans and lentils

So, while both types of carbs give you energy, complex carbs are generally a healthier choice because they provide more sustained energy and help keep your blood sugar levels steady.

Nutrients to help stabilize your blood sugar

Some foods won't increase your blood sugar, and can even help your blood sugar stay more stable. When combining carb foods with the foods below, you can maintain fantastic blood sugars!

Protein: Choose heart healthy, lower fat proteins, such as:

- Lean meats (beef, chicken, turkey, pork)
- Low fat cottage cheese or plain greek yogurt
- Low fat cheese
- Nuts
- Low-sugar peanut butter

Fats: Choose heart-healthy fats, such as:

- Avocado/ Guacamole
- Nuts
- Olive Oil
- Canola Oil
- Margarine
- Flaxseed (ground or oil)
- Chia seeds

Fiber: Choose for digestive health & blood sugar control!

- Whole grain foods
- Non-starchy vegetables
- Beans & Lentils
- Nuts

How do I start a diabetic diet?

I am going to give you my boring, unpopular opinion.... I truly believe what I am about to say... but it is super boring!

You have to start small.

Work on improving your breakfasts for a few weeks or a month. Then, work on your lunches, then dinners, then snacks etc.

Don't make a goal so big that you are overwhelmed. It absolutely won't work for more than a few weeks. My diabetic diet PDF ([The 25/75 Method](#)) will give you the Framework, but please remember... don't do it all at once. START SMALL!

Related: [How to set Diabetes-related SMART goals!](#)

Need ideas for your goals? I can help you!

- Breakfast ideas:
 - [Heart Healthy Breakfast Recipes](#)
 - [Fast Food Breakfast for Diabetics](#)
- Lunch/Dinner:
 - [Cooking Frozen Vegetables in an Air Fryer](#)
 - [Pizza and Diabetes: What You Need To Know + Air Fryer Tortilla Pizza Recipe](#)
- Snacks:
 - [Healthy Sweet Snack Ideas!](#)
 - [Healthy Savory Snack Ideas + 13 RD- Approved Recipes](#)
 - [Balanced Snacks + 20 Healthy Snack Ideas](#)
 - [Traveling with Diabetes: Healthy Road Trip Snacks](#)
 - [Movie Magic: Discovering the Best Low Carb Snacks](#)
 - [The 30 Best Bedtime Snacks for Diabetes](#)

Monitoring and Adjusting Your Diet

Your blood sugar can tell you a lot about how you ate at your last meal. Check BG before and 2 hours after your meal.

- If your blood sugar was less than 130 mg/dL before your meal:
 - Your goal 2 hours after your meal is less than 180 mg/dL
- If your blood sugar was less than 131-179 mg/dL before your meal:
 - Your goal 2 hours after your meal is less than 200 mg/dL
- If your blood sugar was over 180 mg/dL before your meal:
 - Your goal 2 hours after your meal is equal or less than your pre-meal blood sugar.

If you do this a few times and notice that your blood sugar is higher than the recommendations above, you need to take a look at the amount of carbohydrates/sugars you are having at your meal. You likely need to reduce your portion sizes.

You can also make sure you are having a variety of foods at your meals, including protein, fats and/or vegetables. Your digestion slows with these nutrients and gives you better blood sugars!

When to seek help

If your blood sugars are greater than 400 for a few hours, with or without medication, you need to call your doctor, endocrinologist or dietitian. If none of these are available, go to the emergency room or urgent care for an evaluation.

Get Support

I know making lifestyle changes can be overwhelming, which is why I am here to support you! If you are ready to take the leap and transform your health, check out my [Resources Page](#). I can help you grow & flourish with diabetes!

EXPLORE MORE

- [A1c Conversion Chart: A Tool for Diabetes Management](#)
- [Diabetes 101: A Beginner's Guide for Type 2](#)
- [The Ultimate Guide On How To Lower A1c!](#)
- [How To See A Diabetes Dietitian Online!](#)