

Taking care of your heart



For Hispanic and Latino Americans

Hispanic and Latino Americans are more likely to have diabetes when compared with all people who live in the United States. Having diabetes may increase your chances of heart disease compared to people without diabetes.

Your healthcare provider should help you manage diabetes and reduce your chances of getting heart disease. Use the tips below to make an action plan to get started.



Make a plan that works for you

It is not easy having diabetes, but you can use the tips below to help manage it better. Together with the help of your healthcare provider and family, make a plan that fits your lifestyle and your daily routine. Use your action plan to help you take care of yourself.

Here are some things to consider including in your plan:

- **Keep track of your blood pressure, triglyceride, and cholesterol levels.**
- **Check your blood sugar levels** regularly as recommended by your healthcare provider.
- **Go to all of your medical appointments.**
- **Take your diabetes medicines as directed.**

- **Stop smoking** by asking for help to quit.
- **Get to and stay at a healthy weight.**
- **Be active** by trying to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week or as recommended by your healthcare provider. Limit the amount of time you spend sitting down to less than 90 minutes at any one time.
- **Eat foods low in salt, saturated fat, and trans fat.**

Checking your blood sugar levels

Keep track of your blood sugar levels—managing your blood sugar may help you protect your heart.

- Check your own blood sugar levels at home. If you do not know how to do this, ask your healthcare provider to show you. Be sure to write down the results and times of all your tests. Share this information with your healthcare team.
- Have an A1C test done in your healthcare provider's office 2 or more times a year or as directed by your healthcare provider. This test shows your average blood sugar level over the span of 3 months.

My goals

Ask your healthcare provider what your goals should be. Write your goals in the last row of the table below.

	Before a meal	1 to 2 hours after beginning a meal	A1C test
Recommended goal*	80 to 130 mg/dL [†]	Less than 180 mg/dL [†]	Under 7% [‡]
My goal			

*American Diabetes Association recommendation.

[†] This is a way to measure blood sugar in lab tests—*mg/dL* means *milligrams per deciliter*.

[‡] Your healthcare provider may set a higher or lower A1C goal for you.





Eat well to live well

By making small changes to the foods you eat, you can still enjoy foods that may be part of your cultural heritage. Below are some examples of what may be considered traditional Hispanic and Latino American dishes. If you don't see food choices that apply to what you eat, use the space to list what *you* usually eat. Then, talk about food with your dietitian or healthcare provider.

According to the American Diabetes Association, a diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and healthy fats is a good choice. This type of diet (sometimes called a *Mediterranean-style diet*) may benefit people with diabetes and people who are at risk of heart disease.

It is also important to eat healthy amounts of food. This means limiting portion sizes.

Healthy foods to choose more often

Choose foods that are low in cholesterol, saturated fat, trans fat, and salt (sodium).

Foods you may choose more often:

- Meats and proteins** Fish, lean beef and pork, chicken and turkey (with skin removed), tofu, and beans
- Fresh vegetables** Green vegetables, such as spinach, broccoli, peppers, and lettuce
- Legumes** Beans, lentils, and fat-free refried beans
- Healthy fats/oils** Olive or canola oil, plain nuts, avocados, and fish (such as tuna or salmon)
- Fresh fruits** Bananas, papayas, oranges, and mangoes
- Whole-grain foods** Brown rice and corn or whole wheat tortillas
- Other foods** Low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt
- Fresh salsa made with tomatoes, onions, chilies, and cilantro
- Herbs, spices, fresh garlic, vinegar, and lemon juice for added flavor
- _____
- _____

Foods to eat less often or in small amounts

The foods on this list are high in cholesterol, saturated fat, trans fat, or salt (sodium).

Foods you may choose less often:

- Meats** Meats that are high in fat or cholesterol, such as beef, sausages, bacon, and pork
- Refined grains** Cornbread, white flour tortillas, white bread, and white rice
- Fried foods** Fried dough/desserts, fried plantains (some know this as tostones), and rice or pasta fried in oil
- Foods with these unhealthy fats** Saturated fats (fats that are solid at room temperature), such as butter, bacon grease, and lard
- Artificial trans fats (fats processed to be more solid), often found in fried foods and in baked goods, such as pastries, biscuits, and crackers
- Other foods** Whole milk and regular cheese
- Processed foods, such as frozen meals, canned soups, deli meats, sauces, and prepared mixes
- _____
- _____

Talk with your healthcare provider or dietitian to learn more.