

# Diabetes

## Life Lines



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**Diabetes - the Medical Perspective**

Most everyone knows that hypertension, or high blood pressure, can be dangerous to one's health. But, it doesn't hurt like a broken hip. Sometimes people with hypertension feel just fine and skip their medication. This isn't good. Blood pressure medication needs to be taken every day, even when you are feeling really good.

Your veins don't burst with high blood pressure the way water pipes might under a lot of pressure. What does happen is that the veins and arteries become less "stretchy." They become stiffer and less flexible when blood flows through. This causes the pressure in the veins and arteries to increase. If the pressure gets very

high, some of the pressure will be relieved by "backing up" to the heart or kidneys. This causes damages to these organs, and then they don't work well. Sometimes the damage is permanent, and sometimes it can be reversed. However, sometimes these organs—the heart and kidneys—quit working altogether.

Having uncontrolled or poorly managed hypertension will increase your risk for heart attacks and strokes. Have your blood pressure checked at every doctor's visit.

Remember that your blood pressure can vary from day to day, and even according to the time of day. Several blood pressure readings per year are recommended - more often if your blood pressure tends to be high, you have a couple of high readings, or you have recently begun treatment for hypertension.

## Diabetes and Food



If you have high blood pressure, there are two nutrition-related goals you and your health care team may set: maintaining or achieving a desirable weight; and reducing the amount of sodium (salt) in your diet. However, a more comprehensive dietary plan is called DASH, which stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension.

The DASH diet can be used with any meal plan for those with diabetes. It emphasizes a meal plan that is low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and total fat and higher in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods. It also is lower in sodium than many dietary patterns.

Talk to your dietitian or health care provider about ways to use the DASH diet with your diabetes meal plan. Remember that maintaining or achieving a healthy weight is very important for both your blood pressure and diabetes management.

## Exercise as a Part of Living

Exercise and physical activity may be walking, jogging, playing golf, or swimming. For some, exercise may be sitting down and getting up from a chair.

Give yourself the “plop” test. When you sit down in a chair, (comma) do you “plop” or sit down gracefully and quietly? If you “plop”, it may be time to strengthen those legs and stomach muscles. Practicing activities of daily living are very important as we begin to slow down other activities.

If you do “plop”, try sitting and getting up from a higher chair several times in a row – without a “plop”. Progress to chairs of more normal height as you get better at sitting. For more stomach strengthening, try getting up from a sitting position and sitting without your hands.

Be careful if your balance is not good. Use only chairs that are stable and not placed on throw rugs. As always, consult your health care team before you begin a new exercise program.

## Recipes to Try

### Turkey Pesto Pasta

11 servings, 1 serving = 1 cup

Preparation time: 25 minutes

- 1.5 pounds turkey breast, skinless, boneless
- 1 14-ounce box bowtie pasta
- 3/4 cup pesto
- 2 cups chopped green or red pepper
- 1 small can sliced ripe olives [2.25 ounces]

1. Cut turkey into cubes. Stir fry 5 minutes, adding water if needed to prevent sticking.
2. Cook pasta as directed on package. Drain
3. Combine turkey, pasta, pesto, and peppers.

#### *Per serving*

Calories	268	Cholesterol	40 mg
Protein	18 gm	Saturated fat	1.5 gm
Carbohydrate	29 gm	Fiber	1.5 gm
Fat	9 gm	Sodium	288 mg
Calories from fat	30%		

*2 carbohydrate units or 2 lean meat, 2 starches exchanges*

### Green Beans with Feta

6 servings, 1 cup each

Preparation time: 15 minutes

- 1 pound fresh green beans
- 1/2 cup feta cheese crumbles with basil, dried tomatoes

1. Wash green beans and trim ends.
2. Steam for 6 minutes.
3. Place in serving bowl and toss with feta crumbles.

#### *Per serving*

Calories	77	Cholesterol	10 mg
Protein	4 gm	Saturated fat	2.6 gm
Carbohydrate	6 gm	Fiber	2.6 gm
Fat	4 gm	Sodium	321
Calories from fat	48%		

*1/2 carbohydrate unit or 1 vegetable, 1 fat exchange*



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## Medication Update



People who have diabetes also often have other conditions like hypertension or heart disease. Each condition has its own medication. One of the smartest ways to manage your health is to keep track of all your medications.

This may sound easy if you are only taking 1 or 2 medications but more difficult with more meds. It is also important to list the over-the-counter drugs like pain relievers or laxatives. And, include any vitamin or nutritional supplements you may be taking like calcium or vitamin D. If you also take herbal mixtures, write those on the list as well.

Remembering what medications you take is very hard when an accident happens or even when the nurse asks you during a routine visit. Be smart and get a head start. The medication list will be a great way to check with your health care team for interactions between your medications, or to make sure all your doctors know what the others have prescribed.

## News & Resources

If you want more information about artificial sweeteners, try the educational material Sweet Taste Without the Calories at [www.dce.org/publications/files/sweet\\_taste\\_without\\_calories.pdf](http://www.dce.org/publications/files/sweet_taste_without_calories.pdf) or the educational materials at [www.ific.org/publications/factsheets/lcsfs.cfm](http://www.ific.org/publications/factsheets/lcsfs.cfm)

If you have just started planning meals using carbohydrate counting and need more resources, the Canadian Diabetes Association has a carb counting meal plan with pictures. It is called the Beyond the Basics Guide. Please see: [www.diabetes.ca/Section\\_Professionals/btb.asp](http://www.diabetes.ca/Section_Professionals/btb.asp)

Looking for a list that compiles all the major meter brand test strips and cost per strip? Try [www.Diabeteshealth.com](http://www.Diabeteshealth.com) Click “blood sugars” under newsroom; then “meters”. Then on right side scroll down to “diabetes health reference charts”

Remember to visit Your Guide to Diet and Diabetes  
[www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/diabetes2/](http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/diabetes2/)

## Local Events