



Answers to the 7 Most Common Diabetes Food Questions

What Can I Eat to Reverse Diabetes?

Living with type 2 diabetes is a daily struggle and can be very overwhelming when it comes to food choices. Fear of other health issues, sifting through all the online advice and diets, worrying about your blood sugar levels etc. is a lifestyle nobody wants to deal with.

Well, breathe and relax because this guide is going to help you get started on a journey to reverse your type 2 diabetes. You will clear confusion on what to eat and learn strategies that are simple and don't make you give up your favorite foods.

Please keep in mind before you start making changes in food or activity: if you are on medicine for your blood sugars you may need to consult with your doctor on whether medication adjustments are needed.

Success on your new journey!

Karen Marschel, RDN LD CDCES

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Question #1: What can I drink?

If you are drinking sweet drinks such as Coke, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, sweet tea, sweet coffee drinks or any other sweet drink **start cutting back**. That is the #1 gift you can give your body.

Why? They can raise blood sugar quickly, contain A LOT of sugar, cause inflammation and most have nothing that is good for our body.

Instead, **switch to water** or unsweetened tea or coffee. Flavored waters are okay if they contain 0 carbohydrate. Tea and coffee without added sugar can be good for preventing diabetes. Just do not overdo the caffeine. To avoid caffeine withdrawal, try gradually drinking fewer sweet drinks and replace with water over 2-3 weeks.

Is diet soda, okay? There is nothing good for you in regular soda or diet soda but if you have high blood sugars the lesser of 2 evils in the short term would be diet soda. Water of course would be best but if you need one diet soda daily to get your sweet taste fix, it will not do much to raise your blood sugar.



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Question #2: Do I have to stop eating all sweets?

The short answer is No.

The thing you must figure out is . .
. can you eat a small amount and walk away?

Small portions are key to the sweets. So, if you can't control how much you eat at once then keep it out of the house.

Success strategy: if you are going to buy sweets, then only buy those you can eat one serving/day. If you can't do that then don't keep them in house. Go out once or twice a week and get a small, reasonable portion at the restaurant or convenience store and be done.

Know your weakness foods. For me a big one is ice cream. If I have it in the house, then I will overeat every day until it is gone. What works for me is to have dark chocolate chips. I can eat 5-10 and my craving will be satisfied.

If you have trouble giving up packaged sweets such as cookies, at least start becoming aware of how much you are eating. Get in the habit of checking the serving size in the Nutrition Facts on the package label. There will always be a serving size listed and practice limiting yourself to 1 or 2 servings.



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Question #3: What if I crave a salty snack?

If chips are your favorite, try nuts or popcorn without a lot of butter.

Chips are high carb and high fat. Nuts are extremely low carb and the fat they contain is heart healthy fat.

Popcorn is carbohydrate but good fiber source and you can control the amount of butter you choose to have on it.



You still need to keep portions reasonable. For nuts $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and for popcorn 3-6 cups popped popcorn with light or no butter added.

For a crunch snack try celery. Even with some ranch dip you will likely have fewer calories than if you snack on chips.

For example: 2 stalks celery with 2 tablespoons light ranch dressing is about 80 calories, compared to 20 potato chips for 150 calories!

Why am I talking so much about calories? Isn't carbohydrate what is bad for diabetes?

Bottom line for weight loss is calories. It's just that when we overeat the extra calories are usually from carb foods.

Eating smaller portions of the foods that are both higher calorie and higher carb = less demand for your body to produce insulin and helps with weight loss, which then helps your body use your own insulin more effectively. All of this adds up to reversing diabetes over time.

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Question #4: Should I quit eating potatoes, bread, and pasta?

There is no right or wrong answer here.

If it works for you, it is okay to cut them out. I would suggest trying some different whole grain foods such as barley or wild rice or quinoa. These grain type foods are less processed and are a good source of B vitamins and fiber.



With bread you can simply cut down to maybe 2 slices per day if that works for you.

It is difficult to eat small portions of potatoes and pasta so it is okay to cut them out or you can have them less often if that works.

Calorie savings scenario:

- For breakfast having 1 toast with butter instead of 2 will save 180 calories.
- For lunch having a sandwich with 1 bread instead of 2 will save 130 calories.
- At supper cutting back from 2 cups to 1 cup of pasta, potatoes or rice will save about 200 calories.

Total calories saved for the day = about 500! **That could mean losing a pound a week.**

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Question #5: Should I stay away from fruit since it has natural sugar?

This is a common misconception.

Yes, fruit is all carbohydrate and has natural sugar.

No, you should not avoid FRESH fruit.

Fresh fruit is an excellent snack because you get fiber, water, and lots of disease fighting vitamins.



I have worked with many people who have cut back on sweets and snack foods and replaced them with fresh fruit, and they get better blood sugars and often lose weight because fruit is much lower in calories.

How much fruit to eat?

Keep it simple. 1 piece of fruit = 1 or 2 servings.

Compare the calorie difference:

- 20 chips = 150 calories
- 1 regular candy bar = 200-250 calories
- 1 banana = 120 calories
- 1 medium apple or orange = 75 calories
- 1 cup blueberries = 80 calories
- 1 handful grapes = 140 calories

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Question #6: What if I don't like vegetables?

I think we all know we should eat more veggies, but the problem is often that we don't know how to prepare them, so they taste good and it does take more planning ahead to have them available.

Why more veggies?

They are a **very low carbohydrate, low calorie and high in nutrition** that helps your body fight disease.



For example, you can eat one regular size candy bar for about 250 calories on average OR you can eat 10 medium raw carrots for the same 250 calories.

Tips for eating more vegetables:

- Try salads **with nuts or cheese** or hard-boiled egg
- Try a **little dip or salad dressing** if you need to add flavor to raw veggies
- **Add some leftover cooked veggies** to your omelet
- **Add lettuce, tomato, or other veggies** to your sandwich
- **Try roasting vegetables.** Roasted carrots or beets are 2 of my favorites. Roasting really brings out the natural sweetness of the vegetable. Just google some recipes. They are super easy to make.
- As soon as you buy them **get them peeled and washed** if necessary and have them ready to go.
- **Planning your meals for the week** is key to eating more veggies. If you do not have a plan you may forget about them.
- **Cauliflower** has become extremely popular. You can mash it, roast it, or just steam it.

Trying different foods and recipes is key to getting more vegetables!

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Question #7: Should I eat mainly protein for my meals?

We need protein but most people do not need MORE protein. However, protein does help with hunger control so having protein with most meals and even some snacks does help prevent hunger and cravings.



To be healthy long term you want to try and eat lean protein such as fish, chicken, and turkey more often and higher fat meats less often . . . or at least balance them out.

Greek yogurt, cheese, beans, nuts and nut butters are healthy non-meat protein sources.

Are eggs okay to eat? Yes. Eggs are not the evil food we have been led to believe for many years. Eggs contain high quality protein, vitamin D and 11 other vitamins and minerals our body needs to be healthy.

What about protein shakes and bars? They can work great for a meal replacement or snack if meals are too far apart.

For example, many people do not like to eat breakfast or don't have time. That's where a protein shake or bar comes in handy as a grab and go start to your day.

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Now that you have read through the **Answers to the 7 Most Common Diabetes Food Questions**, it's time to take action.

Start reversing diabetes today by choosing 3 changes you would like to make in your food or drink choices.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Want to get on a fast track with more personalized help now?

Email Karen to schedule a free call to discuss how meal plan coaching with Karen might be a fit to help you prevent or reverse type 2 diabetes.

Email karen@kmmnutrition.com/contact

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About Karen

Karen Marschel is a Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist. She is the founder and CEO of [KM Nutrition, LLC](https://kmmnutrition.com/) and has helped thousands of people prevent, reverse, and manage their diabetes for over 25 years. Helping people problem solve to reach their diabetes management goals through education and coaching is her passion. *"My job is to make it easier for you to get results!"*

