

## Wellness Articles

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**Proposed publication date:** November 28, 2016

**Content provided by:** Alberta Health Services

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## November is Diabetes Month

### How to lower your risk

Diabetes is a large and growing health problem for Albertans. In 2015, the estimated number of Albertans living with diabetes (type 1 and type 2) is 288,000. November marks diabetes month and an opportunity to raise awareness of this disease and educate Albertans on what they can do to protect their health.

Did you know your lifestyle can raise or lower your risk for type 2 diabetes? Here are some healthy lifestyle habits to help lower your risk.

- **Manage your weight:** If you carry extra weight, reducing your weight by 5–10 per cent will lower your risk for type 2 diabetes by half. For example, a person who weighs 220 pounds (100 kg) should try to lose 11–22 pounds (5–10 kg). If you would like help with weight loss, ask your doctor to refer you to a dietitian.
- **Be active:** Aim to be active for at least 30 minutes, 5–7 days each week. Try activities that make your heart beat faster like brisk walking, swimming, cross country skiing, sports, or running. You should breathe faster but still be able to talk.
- **Follow Canada's Food Guide:** Enjoy the suggested servings from each of the four food group for your age and gender. To see the guide, visit [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide). Eat three meals every day. Spreading your food over the day helps control your blood sugar. At each meal, choose three or four food groups and fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit. Include snacks if they help you eat smaller portions at your next meal. Other healthy eating strategies to help reduce risk include:
  - **Eat more fibre:** If your blood sugars are higher than normal, fibre helps manage them by slowing the movement of sugar from food into your

blood. Read the Nutrition Facts table on food packages to find foods higher in fibre. Whole grain foods, vegetables and fruit, and cooked peas, beans, and lentils have fibre.

- **Eat small amounts of healthy fats:** Things like olive and canola oils, avocado, nuts and fish have healthy fats. Cut down on saturated and trans fats found in animal products like cheese, butter, red meats and poultry skin.
- **Limit foods with added sugars:** If your blood sugar is already higher than normal, sweet foods and added sugar in foods quickly raise blood sugar. Drink water instead of juice or sweet drinks with added sugar. Limit sugar, jam, honey, desserts, candy, syrups, and sweet sauces.

Take action to help prevent diabetes, talk to your doctor about your risk, and make healthy lifestyle changes one at a time

Know your risk for developing diabetes @ <http://www.diabetes.ca/about-diabetes/take-the-test>