

# food and diabetes

## grocery shopping guidance

### understanding diabetes & blood sugar

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 45-65% of daily calories should come from carbohydrates.<sup>1</sup> Carbohydrates are your body's main energy source and they serve as fuel for your brain. All carbohydrates are broken down by the body into a sugar called glucose, which is then released into the bloodstream (known as blood sugar or blood glucose). Every time you eat, your body converts food into blood sugar. In healthy individuals, blood sugar levels are managed by a hormone called insulin.

Individuals with type 2 diabetes do not make enough insulin or the insulin does not work properly. This causes blood sugar levels to rise, which can result in complications like weakness and blurred vision in the short term and nerve damage and kidney problems in the long term.

### how does this relate to food?

For people with type 2 diabetes, blood sugar can be controlled through medication prescribed by a doctor, physical activity, and a balanced, healthy diet. It is a myth that people with diabetes cannot eat foods with carbohydrates. Since carbohydrates are the body's preferred source of energy, they are essential. What is most important for people with type 2 diabetes is the quality of the carbohydrate and the balance of intake throughout the day. Planning meals and monitoring blood sugar are important components of blood sugar management. Working with credentialed healthcare professionals to develop a personalized blood sugar management program is essential.

### eating with diabetes

The American Diabetes Association has identified "Diabetes Superstar Foods."<sup>2</sup> These foods received this distinction because they met at least one of the following criteria: they have the type of carbohydrates that do not rapidly increase blood sugar (called low-glycemic foods), they are high in good fats, and/or they have important nutrients like calcium, potassium, and fiber.



beans



citrus



dark green leafy vegetables



tomatoes



fat-free milk & yogurt



nuts



whole grains



berries



fish high in omega-3 fatty acids



sweet potatoes

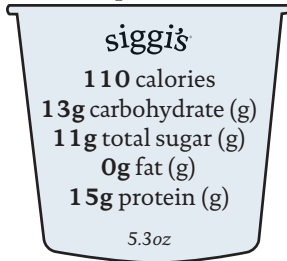
<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov).

<sup>2</sup>"Diabetes Superstar Foods" American Diabetes Association, accessed 03/28/2022, <https://www.diabetes.org/healthy-living/recipes-nutrition/eating-well/diabetes-superstar-foods>.

# comparing food options

It is important to recognize that not all food choices are equal. For example, while fat-free yogurt is a “Diabetes Superstar Food,” not all yogurts are alike. Yogurt does contain carbohydrates and will be a factor in meal planning when you have diabetes. Look for yogurt products that are lower in fat and added sugar. Here is the nutrition information and ingredients of four different strawberry yogurts that you may see on the supermarket shelf.

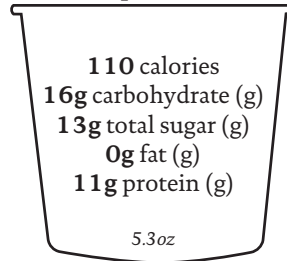
**Option A**



**siggis**  
 110 calories  
 13g carbohydrate (g)  
 11g total sugar (g)  
 0g fat (g)  
 15g protein (g)  
 5.3oz

**INGREDIENTS:** Pasteurized Skim Milk, Strawberries, Cane Sugar, Fruit Pectin, Live Active Cultures

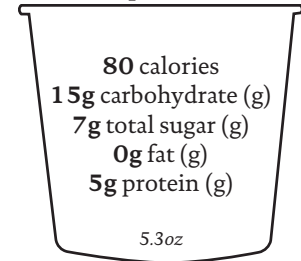
**Option B**



110 calories  
 16g carbohydrate (g)  
 13g total sugar (g)  
 0g fat (g)  
 11g protein (g)  
 5.3oz

**INGREDIENTS:** Cultured nonfat milk, strawberries, cane sugar, water, fruit pectin, locust bean gum, natural flavors, lemon juice concentrate, fruit and vegetable juice concentrate (for color).

**Option C**



80 calories  
 15g carbohydrate (g)  
 7g total sugar (g)  
 0g fat (g)  
 5g protein (g)  
 5.3oz

**INGREDIENTS:** Cultured Grade A Nonfat Milk, Strawberries, Water, Modified Corn Starch, Sugar, Kosher Gelatin, Citric Acid, Natural Flavor, Tricalcium Phosphate, Potassium Sorbate Added to Maintain Freshness, Acesulfame Potassium, Sucralose, Red #40, Vitamin A Acetate, Vitamin D3.

# reading nutrition labels

Reading and comparing nutrition labels can help you make the best choices. The main parts of a food label that you should look at when evaluating foods include:

Nutrition Facts	Amount/Serving	% DV	Amount/Serving	% DV
	<b>Total Fat</b> 0g	<b>0%</b>	<b>Total Carb.</b> 13g	<b>5%</b>
Sat. Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>	Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>	
Trans Fat 0g		Total Sugars 11g		
<b>Cholesterol</b> 10mg	<b>3%</b>	Incl. 7g Added Sugars	<b>14%</b>	
<b>Sodium</b> 50mg	<b>2%</b>	<b>Protein</b> 15g	<b>30%</b>	
Vitamin D 0% • Calcium 10% • Iron 0% • Potassium 4%				

**Serving size 1 container (150g)**  
**Calories per serving 110**

IRI latest 52 weeks as of 2/20/22

**INGREDIENTS:**

Pasteurized Skim Milk, Strawberries, Cane Sugar, Fruit Pectin, Live Active Cultures

**LIVE ACTIVE CULTURES:**

*S. thermophilus*, *L. delbrueckii subsp. bulgaricus*, *Bifidobacterium*, *L. acidophilus*, *L. paracasei*

**Serving Size:** Always check the serving size, as this tells how much of a food the nutrition label is calculated against. And always keep in mind that packages can contain more than one serving.

**Calories:** If you eat two servings you will be getting two times the calories shown on the label. But when choosing between similar foods, the lowest calorie option is not always best. You should keep in mind where the calories come from. A high protein food may be a better choice than one high in sugars.

**Total Carbohydrate:** Total carbohydrate is composed of naturally occurring sugars, added sugars, complex carbohydrates, and fiber. Each of these can impact blood sugar, so it is important to pay attention to the total carbs when checking labels - not just the sugars.

**Total Fat:** This tells you how much fat is in a food per serving, and it is best to choose foods with less saturated fat and no trans fat.

**Sodium:** While sodium doesn't impact blood sugar levels, most people eat much more sodium than they need. It is important to remember that a food that doesn't taste "salty" could still be high in sodium.

**Ingredients:** It is best to choose foods with a simple ingredient list with items that are familiar (i.e., ingredients that you would find in your own kitchen).