



SOME THINGS IN LIFE ARE

FREE

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Robin thinks her diabetes meal plan is boring. She follows it each day because it helps her control her diabetes, but she isn't happy. She would like to have more food choices and snacks she can nibble on that are tasty and fun.

Do you ever feel this way? You don't have to. Just because you have diabetes doesn't mean you must stop eating all of the foods you love. A diabetes meal plan can be very flexible. Visit your dietitian and let him or her update your meal plan so you can eat more of the foods you enjoy and still improve your diabetes control. You may have to eat smaller amounts of those items and eat them less often, but you should be able to find a way to have them.

FREE FOODS

Did you know that there are foods you can add to your meal plan right now, even before you see a dietitian?

These are known as "free" foods. A free food has less than 20 calories AND 5 or fewer grams of carbohydrates. Most people can enjoy up to 3 free food servings each day without any effect on blood glucose or weight. However, because some free foods contain small amounts of carbohydrates, it's a good idea not to eat them all at one time, as the total carbohydrate amount may cause your glucose level to jump too high.

The following is a list of foods that are usually free. Be aware that some brands of these items may not be free, so check the nutrition facts food label on the package before you eat them:

Vegetables

Salad greens (endive, spinach, iceberg lettuce, romaine), 1 cup raw cabbage, cucumber, celery, 5 baby carrots, (or 1 small carrot), hot peppers, green onion, mushrooms, zucchini, radishes, Chinese cabbage, ¼ cup cooked carrots green beans, ½ cup cooked



Proteins

½ ounce of lean meat or ½ ounce of fat-free sliced cheese



Fruits

¼ cup blueberries, 10 small strawberries, ½ cup rhubarb sweetened with sugar substitute

Drinks

Club soda, coffee and tea, (unsweetened or sweetened with a sugar substitute), diet soda, sugar-free drink mixes, 1 packet diet hot cocoa mix, flavored water (carb-free), plain, sparkling or mineral water, bouillon (low-sodium), fat free broth



Snacks

1 cup light popcorn,
2 saltine crackers, 10 goldfish-
style crackers, 1 sugar-free
popsicle, sugar-free gelatin, a
piece of hard candy (regular or
sugar-free), sugar-free gum

**A free food has less than 20 calories AND
5 or fewer grams of carbohydrates.**

Condiments

Many are free: 1 tablespoon ketchup,
¼ cup salsa, 2 tablespoons yogurt,
1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese,
horseradish, mustard, dill or unsweetened
pickles, 2 tablespoons diet salad dressing,
3 tablespoons taco sauce, vinegar, 2
teaspoons sugar-free jam/jelly, 1–2
tablespoons sugar-free pancake syrup,
1 tablespoon light chocolate syrup, 2
tablespoons sugar-free whipped topping



The next time you're at the store, look for other free foods you can add to your meal plan. To do this, check the nutrition facts label listed on the package. Find the serving size at the top of the food label. If one serving of the item contains less than 20 calories and 5 or fewer grams of carbohydrates, add it to your free food list.

The list of free foods has opened up many new food choices for Robin. She now nibbles on a small amount of fat-free sliced cheese if she gets hungry between lunch and dinner, and enjoys ¼ cup of blueberries with 2 tablespoons of sugar-free, whipped topping when she wants something sweet. She also plans to meet with her dietitian to find a way to add more of the foods she enjoys to her daily meal plan. Robin is no longer bored with her meal plan now that she has so many options to choose from. It is so nice to know that her meal plan can change. Yours can, too.