



FOOD AS MEDICINE

# MANAGING LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

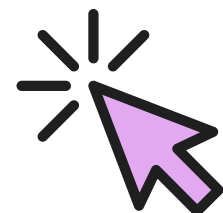
Food is more than something we eat to stay full. It helps keep our bodies healthy and can even help manage certain diseases. The foods we choose each day can help control blood sugar, lower blood pressure, reduce inflammation, and strengthen the immune system. This is especially important for conditions like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. When we use food as part of our health care, we focus on preventing sickness and supporting long-term health.

**Click below to learn more about managing heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, and dementia.**

[Heart Disease & Hypertension](#)

[Diabetes](#)

[Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementias](#)






# HEART DISEASE & HYPERTENSION





## Heart Disease:

Heart disease is the term for group of problems that affect the heart and blood vessels. This happens when sticky plaque builds up in the arteries, making them narrow and harder for blood to pass through. This can lead to serious issues like heart attacks or strokes.

While we can't control factors like age or family history, lifestyle choices, especially what we eat, can make a big difference. A heart-smart diet includes:

- Colorful fruits and vegetables 
- Whole grains like brown rice and oats 
- Lean proteins such as fish, beans, and poultry 
- Healthy fats like olive or canola oil 
- Limiting salt, added sugars, and unhealthy fats 

Along with eating well, people can build in healthy activities into their daily lives to help manage heart disease, such as:

- Staying active 
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Avoiding tobacco
- Getting regular check-ups to help protect the heart
- Managing stress 

## Hypertension:

Hypertension, also called high blood pressure, happens when the force of your blood pushing against your blood vessel walls stays too high. This makes your heart work harder and can lead to serious problems like heart attacks and strokes.

To help manage high blood pressure, it's important to eat healthy foods, use less sodium, and make healthy lifestyle choices. For more information about managing heart disease, the DASH eating plan, how to check your blood pressure, recipes, and tips, click the link [here to view resources from the American Heart Association](#).

It's not about one meal; it's about consistent habits over time. By making these choices, we can reduce risk, manage disease, and support longer, healthier lives.

For more resources and tips on how to manage heart disease and coronary heart disease, please visit the American Heart Association links below.

- [Heart Healthy Recipes](#) and [DASH Diet Recipes](#)
- [Cooking, meal planning, and shopping skills](#)
- [Eat healthy: heart healthy resources](#)
- [Heart check foods](#)
- [Heart healthy swaps](#)
- [5 easy ways to find healthier options while grocery shopping](#)



# FOOD AS MEDICINE

## DIABETES



Diabetes is a long-term condition where the body cannot control blood sugar the right way. This happens when the body does not make enough insulin or cannot use it well. When this occurs, sugar builds up in the blood and can lead to serious problems like heart disease, nerve damage, and kidney disease. Healthy eating for prediabetes and diabetes helps keep blood sugar steady and supports a positive relationship with food.

### Focus on these foods:

**Healthy Carbs:** This includes whole grains (like brown rice and oatmeal), starchy vegetables (like corn, peas, and sweet potatoes), and beans and lentils. On the Diabetes Plate, these foods should fill about one-quarter of your plate

**Non-starchy vegetables:** fill half your plate with non-starchy veggies like broccoli, lettuce, cucumbers, cauliflower, and more!

**Fruits:** You can still eat fruit! It counts as a carbohydrate food but is full of nutrients and can satisfy a sweet tooth!

### **Lean meats & plant-based proteins:**

Choose lean cuts of meats and poultry. Beans, hummus, and lentils are also great options.

**Fats:** Add healthy fats to help lower your cholesterol and protect your heart. Healthy fats can be found in foods like olive oil, nuts, avocados, some types of fish, and a host of other tasty options.

Food nourishes your body, but it's also shaped by culture, memories, and community. Check out our "Healthy Plates with the Tastes You know" in the [Health & Wellbeing section](#) for tips on how to make healthy swaps for your favorite meals or staples

**Tips for eating well** - healthy eating can be simple. Whatever foods you enjoy, small, smart swaps, like adding more veggies or choosing lean proteins, can make a big impact on your health.

- [Fast-food dining](#)
- [Shopping at the grocery store](#)
- [Diabetes plate](#)

**Understanding Food and Blood Sugar** - The food we eat plays a huge role in balancing blood sugar. Learn more about managing your blood sugar, including healthier options, and eating better on the go.

- [Food and Blood Glucose Tips](#)
- [Superstar food for diabetes](#)
- [Tips for eating healthy on the go](#)

**Recipes for diabetes management** - click to view diabetes-friendly recipes, meal planning resources, live cooking classes, and more.



# ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE & DEMENTIA



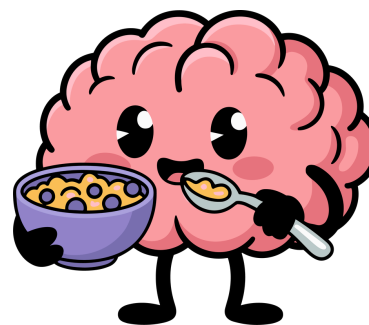
Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are progressive brain disorders that slowly destroy memory, thinking, and reasoning skills, eventually making it difficult for a person to carry out everyday tasks and activities.

Eating well is important for staying strong and healthy. For someone with Alzheimer's or dementia, not getting enough good nutrition can lead to weight loss and make behavior problems worse.

As the disease progresses, regular meals can become harder. They might feel confused by too many food choices, forget to eat, or think they've already eaten. The tips below can help improve health for both the person with dementia and you as their caregiver.

• **Nutrition tips:** Focus on nutrient-dense, brain-healthy foods like:

- leafy greens
- berries
- whole grains
- fish
- nuts
- olive oil
- limit processed foods, sugar, and excess salt.



- **Tip:** Keep meals small, frequent, easy to eat, and paired with hydration and routine to support appetite, cognitive function, and overall health.

• **Possible causes of poor appetite:** People with Alzheimer's Disease or dementia may have a poor appetite because of memory problems, medication changes or side-effects, physical issues like trouble chewing or swallowing, or changes in taste and smell that make eating harder. Feeling sad, tired, confused, or being in a noisy or confusing environment, can also make someone less interested in food.

## Resources:

- [Alzheimer's Association](#) - Learn more about food and eating for those with Alzheimer's disease.
- [Alzheimer's Association Message Boards](#) - Exchange tips with other caregivers who are experiencing eating and mealtime challenges with a loved one with dementia.
- [Swallowing Problems in Adults](#) - Learn about swallowing problems from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

## Local resources:

- [Sutter County Public Health - Healthy Brain Initiative](#)
- [Aging and Disability Resource Connection \(ADRC\) Yuba and Sutter Counties](#)

