



FOOD AS MEDICINE

MANAGING LONG-TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS

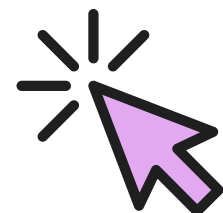
Food is more than something we eat to stay full. It helps keep our bodies healthy and can even help manage certain diseases. The foods we choose each day can help control blood sugar, lower blood pressure, reduce inflammation, and strengthen the immune system. This is especially important for conditions 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 other dementias.

[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 more balanced 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](#)
- [Heart check foods](#)
- [Cooking, meal planning, and shopping skills](#)
- [Heart healthy swaps](#)
- [Eat healthy: heart healthy resources](#)
- [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. With diabetes food is medicine. This page will focus on information to help you manage your diabetes.

As part of healthy eating, everyone needs the same type of things, such as vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, protein, and fat. These are called nutrients. Together, nutrients in food help the body work. Carbohydrates are part of a healthy diet. Focus on choosing complex carbs like whole grains (brown rice, quinoa, oats), beans and lentils, fruits, vegetables, and starchy veggies like sweet potatoes, which provide fiber and are digested more slowly. Simple carbs, refined grains, and other sugars digest quickly and can cause rapid blood sugar spikes. By focusing on fiber-rich complex carbs, limiting simple carbs, and being mindful of portions, carbs can fit into a healthy eating pattern for everyone!

Focus on these foods:

Complex Carbs: 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.

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 and how to fit your favorite meals or staples into your lifestyle.

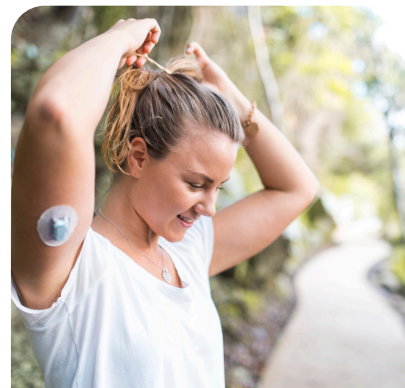
Tips for eating well - healthy eating can be simple. Whatever foods you enjoy, small, smart swaps, like adding more veggies or choosing lean proteins, can make a big impact on your health.

- [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 conditions that affect memory, thinking, and problem-solving over time, gradually making everyday activities more challenging. With early awareness, supportive care, and community resources, individuals and families can better navigate these changes and maintain quality of life for as long as possible.

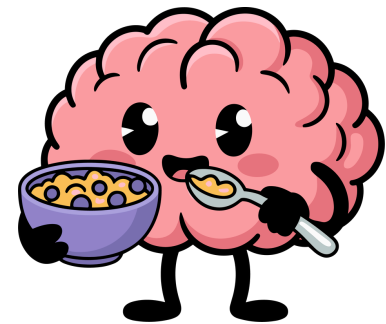
Eating well is important for staying strong and healthy. For someone with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, not getting enough good nutrition can lead to weight loss and make behavior problems worse.

As the disease progresses, regular meals can become harder. A person with Alzheimer's disease or dementia may 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](#)

