Diabetes Awareness Month

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Healthy Eating for Diabetes Prevention and Management



November is Diabetes Awareness Month, and a great reminder to take action with preventative health to reduce your risk and improve your wellness. About 1 in 10 Canadians lives with diagnosed diabetes, and every three minutes, one person is diagnosed with diabetes in Canada. The good news is that many cases of Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed through healthy lifestyle habits, particularly healthy eating.

Here are five simple ways to make healthy eating part of your routine:

1. Fill half your plate with vegetables. Vegetables provide fibre, vitamins and minerals that support overall health. Try adding non-starchy vegetables to lunch and dinner, and snacks. Fresh, frozen, jarred or canned are all nutritious options.

2. Replace refined grains with whole grains. Instead of white bread, pasta and rice, consider whole grain alternatives. Oats, whole-grain bread, brown rice and quinoa provide fibre that helps regulate blood sugar and keeps you feeling satisfied longer. Consider pasta made with pea, lentil, chickpea or quinoa flour for an added protein and fibre boost.

3. Include enough protein with your meals. Protein-rich foods such as chicken, lean meats, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu, nuts and Greek yogurt are essential for health, and help keep your feeling full for longer. Pairing protein with carbohydrates can also help moderate blood sugar fluctuations after eating.

4. Cut back on sugary drinks. A 12-ounce standard soda (e.g., Coke/Pepsi) contains about 39 to 42 grams of sugar (~10 teaspoons). This alone exceeds a full day's recommended limit. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, and avoid pop, sweetened coffee drinks or juice.

5. Make healthy choices convenient. Busy schedules can make balanced eating challenging. Keep easy options on hand, such as frozen vegetables, canned beans, fruit and unsalted nuts, to make nutritious choices easier throughout the day.

Small, consistent changes can make a meaningful difference. A nutrient dense diet paired with regular physical activity can help reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes.

Want personalized nutrition advice? Contact FSEAP to speak with a Registered Dietitian free of charge and learn how to build healthy habits that work for you.