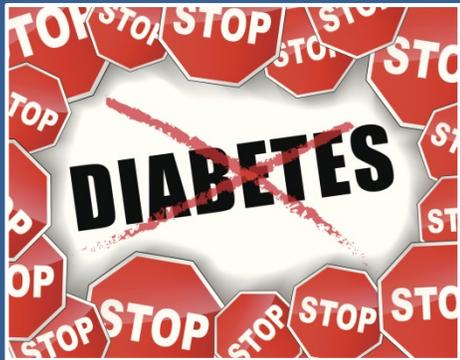


## QuickTakes



### Diabetes Prevention

- About 29.1 million people – or 9.3 percent of Americans – have diabetes.
- Diabetes is the 7th leading cause of death in the United States.
- Ninety-five percent of diabetes cases are type 2 diabetes.
- There has been a huge surge in type 2 diabetes in the past 20 years.
- A healthy diet and plenty of exercise will help you prevent diabetes.

## DIABETES AND YOUR HEART

By Alisa Scherban, MPH, RD, CDE, CDN

If you have diabetes, your risk for heart disease is huge. Unmanaged diabetes doubles your risk for heart disease and stroke. Heart disease is the number one killer of people with diabetes. Yet only 18% of people with diabetes think they have a higher-than-normal risk for heart disease.

If you have diabetes, you have a lot of medical issues to deal with. Just managing blood sugar levels can feel like a full-time job. But one part of having diabetes that is often overlooked is the effect it has on your heart.

### THE DIABETES/HEART ABCS

The good news is that you can take action to reduce heart disease risk. Just remember the ABCs: A1c levels, Blood pressure and Cholesterol.

#### A IS FOR A1C

High blood sugar levels cause the problems associated with diabetes. That's why it's so important to measure glucose (blood sugar). The A1c test is like a lie detector for glucose. It reveals how much extra sugar has been in your blood for the past two to three months. A high A1c number means high levels of glucose have been circulating in your blood.

Most people with diabetes should aim for an A1c level close to 6%. A normal A1c for those without diabetes is 4 - 6%.

#### B IS FOR BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure is about twice as common in people with diabetes as in those without diabetes. High blood pressure causes your heart to work harder to pump blood. This strains the heart, damaging blood vessels and increasing health risks. Having both diabetes and high blood pressure multiplies your risk of these complications.

A blood pressure reading below 120/80 is considered normal. For most people, a systolic pressure (the top number) over 140 and a diastolic pressure (the bottom number) over 90 is considered high. People with diabetes should have their blood pressure checked several times a year.

#### C IS FOR CHOLESTEROL

If your glucose and blood pressure are high, your cholesterol may be off as well. Talk to your doctor about how often you should have a cholesterol test. Learn what numbers you should aim for.

## DIET CHOICES TO REDUCE RISK FOR HEART DISEASE AND DIABETES

If you have diabetes, you are probably already trying to follow a meal plan to control your carbohydrate intake. Eating a heart-healthy diet on top of meal planning for diabetes may sound overwhelming.

But don't be intimidated. Heart-healthy foods are also good choices if you have diabetes!

As always, it is still important to watch your carbohydrate intake and portion sizes to control your blood glucose. Just remember that there is more to meal planning than carbohydrate intake. Healthy eating is about making healthy choices within all of the different food groups.

1. One of the most important things you can do to eat heart-healthy is to limit foods that are high in unhealthy fats. Steer clear of animal fats like butter and fatty meats. Avoid fried foods. Choose heart-healthy olive or safflower oils for cooking. And remember: Even the most heart-healthy oils are still high in calories. Use sparingly!
2. A heart-healthy diet is also high in fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains. These foods are all high in important nutrients, especially fiber. Obviously these foods will also add carbohydrates, so make sure you are eating portions that work with your meal plan.

Complex carbs tend to delay the rise in blood sugar levels. Refined carbs (white bread, white pasta, white rice, etc.) and simple carbs (like table sugar, honey, cakes, cookies and other sweets) hit the bloodstream more quickly, making them tougher for the body to handle. People with diabetes, as well as those at risk, should minimize most sources of simple carbs because they generally lack nutrition and lead to weight gain.

3. Sodium is another issue. If you have diabetes, you should try to keep your sodium intake to less than 2,300 mg per day. If you have diabetes and high blood pressure, you should aim for 1,500 mg per day or less. Avoid prepared foods as much as possible. And check food labels whenever possible. You may be shocked to learn how much sodium is in a serving of soup or a slice of bread!

Sources: American Heart Association, [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org); American Diabetes Association, [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

## Mexican Barley Pilaf Serves 6

Satisfying whole-grain barley holds up well to the bold flavors in this dish. If you don't have barley on hand, use brown rice. Serve the pilaf as a main course or a side dish to grilled chicken or fish.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 large sweet onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-2 fresh jalapeño peppers, seeded and finely chopped, optional
- 1 cup pearl barley or brown rice
- 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, diced
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 1/2 cups water or low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 15-ounce can low-sodium black or pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

### NUTRITION INFO PER 1/2 CUP SERVING

164 Calories	32 g Carbohydrate
3 g Fat	7 g Fiber
1 g Saturated fat	314 mg Sodium
6 g Protein	



Recipe source: Healthy Living Kitchens

### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add onions, garlic and jalapeños, if using. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes.
2. Add barley or rice and tomatoes and cook for 3 minutes more. Stir in chili powder, cumin, oregano and salt. Add water and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for 40 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand for 5 minutes.
4. Add drained beans and fresh herbs. Toss to combine.

Let stand for 5 minutes to warm the beans. Serve warm.