

# Diabetes Awareness Month: Smart Eating Strategies for Healthy Choices

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Did you know, over 3 million Canadians are living with diabetes and the prevalence continues to increase. Diabetes contributes to 30% of strokes, 40% of heart attacks, 50% of kidney failures and 70% of non-traumatic leg and foot amputations. Diet, physical activity and other lifestyle factors can lower risk of developing diabetes, as well as help manage diabetes for those diagnosed. This November, for National Diabetes Awareness Month, it is the perfect time for dietary strategies to support your blood sugars and reduce your risk factors. Ready to explore how you can nourish your body while managing diabetes effectively?

Let us dive deeper into practical tips to help you thrive!

## Start Your Day Right with Balanced Breakfasts:

Mornings set the tone for the day, and a balanced breakfast is crucial for managing blood sugar levels. Swap out sugary cereals or pastries for options that combine protein, fiber, and healthy fats. Try a veggie omelet with a side of whole-grain toast or Greek yogurt topped with fresh berries and a sprinkle of chia seeds. These choices help stabilize blood sugar and keep you feeling satisfied throughout the morning.

## Healthy Dessert Alternatives:

Ending the meal on a sweet note doesn't mean sacrificing your blood sugar control. Swap out traditional sugary desserts with options that are naturally sweet and high in fiber. Try baked apples with a sprinkle of cinnamon or a small serving of fruit salad with a dollop of Greek yogurt. For a creamy treat, make chia seed pudding with unsweetened almond milk and a touch of vanilla extract.

## Getting tested is an important tip that not everyone knows:

Get tested: If you are over 40, it is recommended to be tested for diabetes every 3 years. If you have one or more risk factors, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and if you are overweight, you should be tested earlier and more often.

## Smart Snack Swaps for Steady Energy:

Snacks can play a crucial role in maintaining stable blood sugar levels. Rather than reaching for processed snacks, choose options that combine protein and fiber. Fresh veggies with hummus, a handful of nuts, or a piece of fruit with a small serving of cottage cheese are great choices. These snacks help keep your energy levels steady and prevent blood sugar spikes.

## Focus Dinner on Lean Proteins & Veggies:

Evenings are a time to enjoy a satisfying meal while keeping blood sugar in balance. Instead of heavy, carb-laden dishes, prepare dinners that feature lean proteins such as grilled fish or chicken, along with a generous serving of non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, or zucchini. Complement the meal with a small serving of whole grains like barley or farro for added fiber and nutrients.

This November for Diabetes Awareness Month, get informed, get tested, and take action to protect your health. Diabetes awareness is key and having the right information and support can make a big difference. Focus on nourishing your body and making thoughtful food choices that support your health and well-being. For more personalized tips and guidance, reach out to your FSEAP Registered Dietitian. Here's to a mindful and nourishing November!