Inner Health
Nutrition Consulting

November: A Month of Awareness & Action!

As the days grow shorter and the year winds down, November invites us to pause and focus on our health. This month marks both **Men's Health Awareness Month** (Movember) and **Diabetes Awareness Month**, two important reminders of how small, consistent choices can make a big difference to overall health.

Movember shines a light on the unique health challenges men face, and encourages open conversations, early check-ups, and supportive lifestyles. Additionally, **Diabetes Awareness Month** highlights the importance of balanced eating, movement, and mindful habits to help manage and prevent diabetes. Together, these campaigns remind us that prevention starts with awareness … and action starts with you! Whether it's scheduling that overdue check-up, taking a brisk walk after dinner, or simply checking in on someone you care about, every step counts toward a healthier tomorrow.

At **Inner Health Nutrition**, we are your trusted, expert partners in nutrition and health. Let us guide you & your family towards achieving those health goals, one small change at a time.

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Men's Health Awareness Month (Movember)

November is Men's Health Awareness Month, also known as Movember. This month is all about raising awareness for the health challenges men face and encouraging them to take action. Men are often less likely than women to visit their healthcare provider, yet they are at a risk for certain conditions such as:

Prostate cancer – While age and family history are risk factors, lifestyle choices also make a difference. Early detection through regular check-ups including blood work can save lives (1). Nutrition recommendations for supporting prostate health:

- Limit intake of red and processed meats
- Eat more plant based meals!
- Make water your drink of choice
- Choose whole, minimally processed foods

Click HERE to access more information about prostate cancer and nutrition.

Mental health – This Movember, let's not forget mental health. Mental health issues in men may go unnoticed, which can sometimes lead to underdiagnosis. Encouraging open conversations, reducing stigma, and checking in with the men in your life can make a real difference. Sometimes, the bravest thing we can do is open up the conversations surrounding our mental health (3).

Click HERE to read our May 2025 newsletter and learn about how nutrition can impact mental health.

Tips for supporting men's health:

- Schedule regular check-ups and screenings with your health care provider.
- Encourage open conversations about mental health with those close to you.
- Promote a balanced lifestyle: nutritious diet, regular exercise, enough sleep.
- Reduce stress through hobbies, or social connection.

Movember isn't just about growing a moustache! It's about raising awareness, starting conversations, and taking proactive steps to live healthier lives!

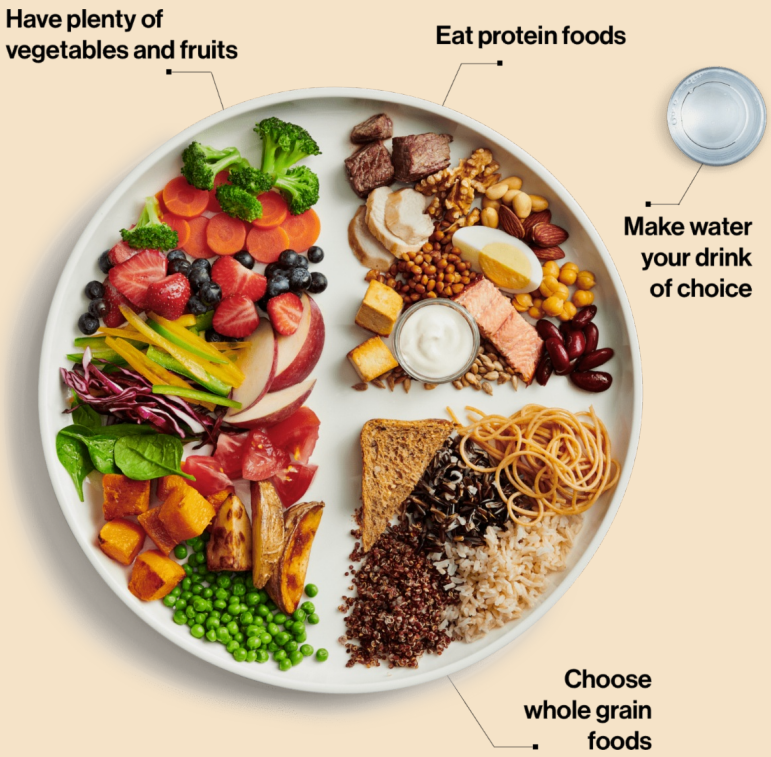
All About Diabetes (4)

November is also **Diabetes Awareness Month**, a time to highlight the importance of understanding, managing, and preventing diabetes. With nearly 1 in 3 Canadians living with diabetes or prediabetes, it's essential to raise awareness about healthy eating

habits, the impact of lifestyle choices, and the support available for those living with diabetes. Whether you're living with diabetes or supporting a loved one, small changes in diet and lifestyle can make a big difference in managing blood sugar levels and improving overall well-being. When was your last blood work done? It's time!

Myth Buster! (4)

Myth: There is a specific diet for those living with diabetes.
Fact: Dietary recommendations for diabetics are based on healthy eating guidelines that all of us can follow.



The Balanced Plate (see above) is the simplest way to consider nutritional balance for diabetics (and the rest of us). Guidelines also stress the importance of eating regularly (ideally every 3-4 hours) which in turn doing so can can help regulate hunger and prevent overeating at your next meal. This, coupled with meal planning in advance, simple meal prep ideas and prioritizing meals can help manage blood sugar levels.

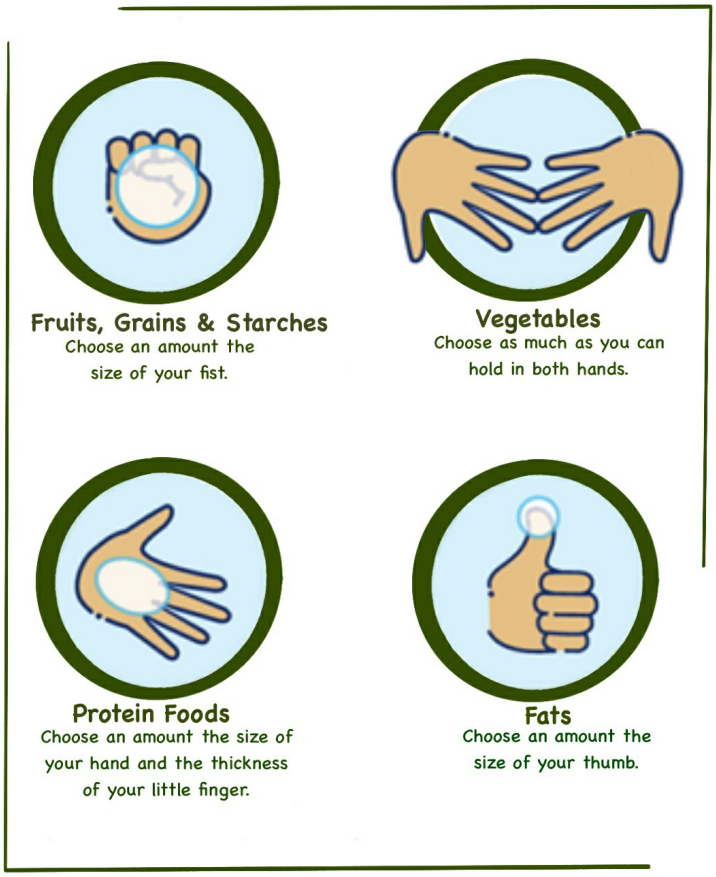
The Balanced Plate is key for managing blood sugar levels:

- **¼ of your plate** includes **whole grains** and **other starchy vegetables** such as sweet potato or corn; these are important sources of dietary fibre (among many other nutrients). Fibre helps with digestion and satiety and slowly releasing glucose into the blood stream.
- **¼ of your plate** includes **lean protein** meats, fish, seafood and plant-based alternatives such as tofu and legumes. Protein, like fibre, slows down digestion and helps to slowly release the glucose into the bloodstream.
- **½ your plate** should have **vegetables** including leafy greens which provide important sources of dietary fibre, nutrients and satiety.

"Handy" portion guide (4)

Your hands can be very useful in estimating the right amount of food to eat. If you are

not ready to take out the measuring utensils, this is a great place to start! When you are planning a meal, use the following suggested portion sizes as a guide:



- **Fruits, Grains & Starches Examples:** Orange, apple, potatoes, brown rice, pasta, crackers, breads, cereals
- **Vegetables Examples:** Broccoli, spinach, green beans, bell peppers, zucchini, eggplant, swiss chard, collards
- **Protein foods Examples:** Lean beef, chicken, pork, fish, eggs, tofu, greek yogurt, seafood
- **Fats Examples:** Olive oil, avocado oil, nut butter, nuts, seeds, hummus, butter, margarine

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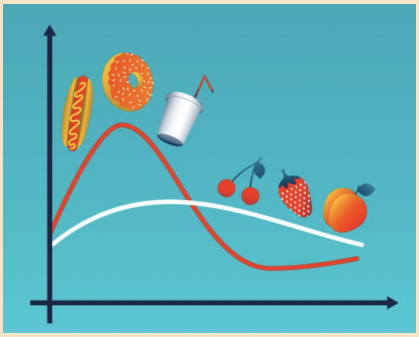
What is the Glycemic Index? (5)



Whether you are a person who it affected by diabetes or not, understanding what the glycemic index is a great way to manage your blood sugar. The glycemic index (GI) is a scale that ranks carbohydrate-containing foods by how fast they raise your blood sugar. Foods with a **high** GI increase blood sugar at a faster rate than foods with a **low** GI. **Why is this important?** Because keeping blood sugar levels stable helps maintain steady energy, reduce cravings, and support long-term health. Choosing more low-GI foods can help prevent sudden spikes and crashes in energy. Over time, this can improve insulin sensitivity, support heart health, and lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

In addition to the type of carbohydrate you choose to eat, the quantity also has a role to play when it comes to its effect on your blood sugar. For example, eating too large a serving of a low GI food can still cause a high blood sugar response. Essentially, the GI

of a food can change based on the serving size eaten, but also the cooking method, and even what that food is paired with. For example, by pairing a high GI food with a combination of non-starchy, fibre-rich vegetables, lean protein and healthy fats at each meal or snack, you can reduce the overall glycemic response.

Click HERE to learn more about Glycemic Index & to see a low/medium/high GI food chart.

Intermittent Fasting & Diabetes (6)

Intermittent fasting (IF) involves a pattern of eating where eating and drinking anything with calories only happens during a selected time. There are many patterns of IF, for example, some people choose to fast daily for 16 hours, with an 8 hour eating window, while others choose to have a 2 day fast with a 5 day eating window. Although more research needs to be done on the effects IF has on diabetes, here are some **potential benefits**:

- Weight maintenance/loss
- Improved blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels
- Improved blood sugar management

Some things to **keep in mind** before jumping into an IF eating pattern:

- Blood sugar fluctuations: Large or infrequent meals may cause high or low blood sugar. Check with your healthcare team about adjusting medications or monitoring.
- Nutrient deficiencies: A short eating window can make it harder to meet nutrient needs. Ask your healthcare provider if supplements are needed.
- Risk of overeating: Going long periods without food can lead to overeating later. Portion size and food quality still matter.

Click HERE to learn more about intermittent fasting & diabetes.

The Importance of Movement (4)

Lastly, don't forget to move, especially after meals! Most of us know that physical activity improves heart health, gives us more energy, strengthens muscles (and bone health), among other benefits. When it comes to diabetes, movement causes the body to utilize the energy (or glucose) in our muscles and draws more glucose out of the blood stream and into the cell, all without the need for insulin! This helps to reduce blood sugar levels. Only 10-15 minutes of movement after your meals is all that is needed to show this helps. No gym membership is needed except good intention to move!

To learn more about Diabetes and nutrition recommendations, click HERE to visit Diabetes Canada.

Diabetes-Friendly Recipes

Baja Fish

Tacos

Pear and Barley Salad

Wild Rice & Apple Stuffed Acorn Squash

Raspberry Almond Overnight Oats

Protein Oat Pancakes

A Sweet Reminder After Halloween

With Halloween just behind us, it's the perfect time to think about sugar intake. While enjoying sugary foods in moderation is part of life, consistent high sugar consumption can challenge blood sugar balance, especially for those with or at risk for diabetes. Here are some practical tips (7):

- Eat sweet food **after** your main meal/snack of protein or vegetables to slow sugar absorption and to reduce over-indulgence.
- Be mindful by **including candy intentionally**, rather than having it replace nutritious foods.
- No rush! Don't feel like you need to finish all of the halloween candy right away. Feel free to freeze some for later, or even better, **share extras** with friends and family.
- Use the halloween stash to teach your kids about **mindfulness and moderation**, rather than restriction.
- Remember **hydration**. Water helps balance blood sugar spikes.
- **Keep moving**! Even short walks after meals help regulate blood sugar.

1. Prostate health https://www.health.harvard.edu/topics/prostate-health
2. Testicular Cancer https://cancer.ca/en/about-us/stories/2023/5-reasons-testicular-cancer
3. Men and mental health https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/men-and-mental-health
4. Diabetes Canada https://www.diabetes.ca/
5. Glycemic Index https://diabetes.ca/DiabetesCanadaWebsite/media/Managing-My-Diabetes/Tools and Resources/glycemic-index-food-guide.pdf?ext=.pdf#_ga=2.78718100.1045130269.1761790388-2131293642.1761790388&_gac=1.20438346.1761790388.Cj0KCQjw9obIBhCAARIsAGHm1mQM0KtgmUM4-gKSo1-crJX2OzyYki420tH69tzKwAhk92vh7OkiWDEaAiN-EALw_wcB
6. Intermittent Fastinghttps://www.diabetes.ca/getmedia/813ba88d-a1f8-4838-b742-daca1e096706/Intermittent_Fasting_Ver_4.pdf?ext=.pdf
7. Halloween sugar intake https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/share/sugar-intake-halloween/