

# 1500 Calorie ADA Diet

Jan 06, 2016 | By Sarah Davis on Livestrong.com



The 1500 calorie ADA (American Diabetic Association) diet is designed primarily for those individuals who are overweight and suffering from diabetes. It is a low calorie diet that includes a certain number of carbohydrate exchanges that can be eaten in a day, depending on the person. The purpose of the 1500 calorie ADA diet is to promote weight loss or maintenance while at the same time reducing blood sugar levels in order to prevent complications that may result from unmanaged diabetes such as neuropathy and blindness.

## Limiting Sugar Intake

People living with diabetes have a high amount of sugar in their blood. When the amount of sugar in someone's blood increases or decreases drastically, the person becomes at risk for serious health complications. In order to keep their blood sugar from becoming too high, diabetics must limit their sugar intake. They should eat sweets such as cakes, cookies, pies and candy only rarely, if ever. There are sugar-free versions of many sweets that still have

carbohydrates but do not raise blood sugar as high as the regular versions do. There is room for the occasional dessert on the 1500 calorie ADA diet, but it needs to be infrequent, planned and in a small portion.

### **Counting Carbohydrates or Exchanges**

In the 1500 calorie ADA diet, calories, as well as carbohydrates are counted or estimated. Calories are limited to 1500 per day and carbohydrates are limited to about 45 to 65 percent of calories in the diet, which would be about 169g to 244g per day, but no more. You can either count grams of carbohydrates or exchanges instead, which is a way to estimate carbohydrate servings, similar to a points system. Ask your doctor or dietitian for an exchange list of foods or find an exchange list online.

### **Eating Protein Foods Often**

Protein helps stabilize blood sugar and promote energy in diabetics so it should be eaten often on the 1500 calorie ADA diet. Some protein, even if it is only a small amount, should be eaten with every meal and every snack on this diet to offset some of the effects of consuming carbohydrates. Foods that are rich in protein include meats such as beef, turkey, chicken, pork and seafood. Soy foods, tofu, beans, nuts, peanut butter, lentils, cheese, cottage cheese and protein shakes are also high protein foods.

### **Snacking Often**

Even though the 1500 calorie ADA diet is a fairly low calorie diet, it is still important to snack often. Skipping meals or going hours without eating something can make a diabetic weak and can be dangerous for a person's blood sugar. Protein foods should be eaten every two to three hours even if it is only a small meal such as an apple and a string cheese. Consistency is important in meal times and snacking so meals and snacks should be eaten at around the same times each day to maintain blood sugar stability.

### **Limiting Fats**

Being overweight or obese not only increases the chances that a person will develop diabetes, but it also worsens the symptoms and complications from diabetes for people who already have the condition. Therefore, on the 1500 calorie ADA diet, intake of dietary fats is limited in order to decrease calories and help promote weight loss. Even though foods such as beef and chicken are high in protein, the lean versions, such as lean beef and skinless chicken breast should be chosen over dark meat and higher fat options.