



# Lifestyle Supports for South Asians with Type 2 Diabetes

This handout provides an overview of lifestyle change support for South Asian individuals living with type 2 diabetes (T2D) in British Columbia.

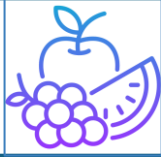


[www.t2dnetwork.ca/southasian-resources](http://www.t2dnetwork.ca/southasian-resources)

Connecting you to T2D resources that matter - carefully curated with input from people with lived experience and providers.

## Tips for Success

Take one step at a time – choose what works best for you!



### Food & Ways of Eating

- Eating order:** Eat protein and vegetables first, then carbohydrates. This can help prevent big blood sugar spikes. Example: eat vegetables first, then dal and roti or brown rice.
- Pair carbohydrates:** Eat carbohydrates with protein or healthy fat to slow sugar absorption. Example: fruit with nuts, or avocado on whole-wheat toast.
- Limit Snacking:** Try to eat 3 meals a day. Each meal should include protein. Examples: paneer, chickpeas, or Greek yogurt.
- Last Meal of the Day:** Try to eat your last meal 3–4 hours before bedtime.
- Reduce Fast Carbohydrates and Sugary Drinks:** Eat fewer foods made with white flour (maida), such as samosas and biscuits. Limit fruit juice, energy drinks, and sweet drinks.



### Exercise & Sleep

- Keep a Routine:** Try to sleep, eat, and exercise at the same time each day.
- Move Your Body Often:** Go for walks, visit the gym, do housework, or move in ways you enjoy.
- Short Activity Breaks:** Do shorter walks more often, such as 15–20 minutes after meals, to help control blood sugar.
- Morning Walk:** A 20-minute walk before breakfast may help lower blood sugar and belly fat.
- Sleep Well:** Aim for 7–9 hours of sleep each night.



### Social & Emotional Support

- Stay Connected:** Spend time with family and friends. Share meals, stories, and your health goals.
- Get Out Regularly:** Visit the community centre or library 2-3 times a week
- Try New Activities:** Join a class, volunteer, or take part in activities you enjoy.
- Write Things Down:** Keep a journal to write about your feelings, goals, or things you are thankful for.
- Relax Your Mind:** Try yoga, deep breathing, meditation, reading, or quiet time.



# Glossary

## Words to help you understand diabetes

- ❑ **A1C:** A blood test that shows your average blood sugar level over the last 2–3 months.
- ❑ **Blood glucose (or blood sugar):** Sugar in the blood that your body uses for energy.
- ❑ **Carbohydrate:** One of the main nutrients in food. It includes starches, fruits, vegetables, dairy foods, and sugars.
- ❑ **Diabetes:** A condition where blood sugar levels are too high because the body cannot use or store sugar properly for energy.
- ❑ **Fast carbohydrates:** Sugary or refined foods that raise blood sugar quickly (e.g., maida, cookies, candy, fruit juice, soda).
- ❑ **Fasting blood glucose test:** A blood test done after not eating for 8–12 hours, usually overnight. It helps diagnose prediabetes and diabetes.
- ❑ **Fat:** One of the main nutrients in food. It is found in foods like oil, butter, nuts, meat, fish, and some dairy products.
- ❑ **Glycemic index:** A measure of how quickly a food increases blood sugar. Low GI is better.
- ❑ **Glycemic load:** An estimate of how much a serving of food will raise blood sugar.
- ❑ **Hyperglycemia:** High blood sugar.
- ❑ **Hypoglycemia:** Low blood sugar.
- ❑ **Insulin:** A hormone that helps sugar move from the blood into the body's cells for energy. When insulin does not work well or is not made enough, blood sugar stays high.
- ❑ **Insulin resistance:** When the body does not use insulin properly. It is often linked to extra weight and high fat levels in the blood.
- ❑ **Prediabetes:** A condition where blood sugar is higher than normal but not high enough to be diabetes. It increases the risk of type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- ❑ **Protein:** One of the main nutrients in food. It is found in foods like meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, and beans.
- ❑ **Triglyceride:** A type of fat in the blood that comes from extra calories the body does not use right away. High levels can happen when diabetes is not well controlled.
- ❑ **Type 2 diabetes:** A type of diabetes where the body does not make enough insulin or cannot use insulin well. It is more common in adults but can also affect young people.
- ❑ **Visceral fat:** Deep belly fat that surrounds the organs. It is linked to insulin resistance and a higher risk of type 2 diabetes.
- ❑ More common terms can be found at the American Diabetes Association



[www.diabetes.org/about-diabetes/common-terms](http://www.diabetes.org/about-diabetes/common-terms)

*Disclaimer: This information is about lifestyle choices only. It is not medical advice. Please talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions.*

## Learn More about Type 2 Diabetes



[www.t2dnetwork.ca](http://www.t2dnetwork.ca)



## Learn More about Diabetes Stigma?



[www.t2dnetwork.ca/stigma](http://www.t2dnetwork.ca/stigma)

Version: January 2026 – V1

