

Food Shopping & Diabetes: Healthcare Professionals



Healthy eating plays a large role in the management of diabetes but finding healthy options at the local food store might be confusing or difficult for your clients. This resource offers ideas for identifying potential barriers to choosing healthy foods and find solutions that improve their food shopping experiences.

7 TIPS TO HELP CLIENTS WITH FOOD SHOPPING

People often know what they like to eat and the difference between junk food and vegetables. During your consultations, focus instead on discussing the food items they can choose that are within their budget and offer health benefits.



Identify financial and food insecurities early in the process.

Food insecurities are prevalent in all communities. Identify if clients need to choose between buying food or medications. To help you address this barrier, the ADCES access and affordability page at [DiabetesEducator.org/Affordability](https://www.diabeteseducator.org/Affordability) offers detailed information on cost-savings programs.



Assess whether your clients qualify for any assistance (i.e. benefits, gift cards, donations, etc.).

Consider referring your client to the social worker within your organization for additional assistance. If no social worker is available, identify hunger relief programs that can help, like those available at [FeedingAmerica.org/our-work/hunger-relief-programs](https://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/hunger-relief-programs). Individuals may qualify for food donations and resources that could positively influence their diabetes and overall health.



Discuss the food budget.

The difference between a food budget of \$50 per week or \$200 per week can influence food recommendations. This will also guide your client's thinking while discussing essential vs. nonessential food purchases.



Create a list based on their preferences and their cultural traditions.

Help them identify healthy food items they enjoy and create a list that emphasizes fruits and vegetables. There is no point in creating a list of foods they will not eat. This list can then serve as a guide for meal planning and food shopping.



Get an idea of where your clients get food and groceries.

Don't assume everyone has access to a grocery store. Individuals in food insecure areas may have better access to convenience stores with limited or no fresh produce. The [food shopping and diabetes tip sheet](#) can guide further discussion.



Assess your client's cooking skills.

Work within their existing cooking skills to find the best solution for meal planning. If your client uses recipes, budget friendly recipes are available from the USDA at [snaped.fns.usda.gov](https://www.snaped.fns.usda.gov).



Review nutrition facts label reading.

Review the label together in detail so you can assess their knowledge. Help them understand which components to focus on for their individual needs. You can use the FDA's guidance on how to read a label at [fda.gov/NewNutritionFactsLabel](https://www.fda.gov/NewNutritionFactsLabel).

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