

NOVEMBER 2024

PLAN FOR HEALTH NEWSLETTER

THIS MONTH'S TOPICS:

- **Diabetes**
- **Men's Health**
- **November Recipe: Creamy Slow Cooker Mashed Potatoes**

Understanding Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that occurs when the body cannot produce or properly use insulin, a hormone our body makes to keep blood glucose within a normal range. When there is not enough insulin, or our body becomes resistant to its effect, blood sugar levels can become elevated, leading to a variety of health problems.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), there are several different types of blood tests that can be done to diagnose this condition:

Hemoglobin A1c test – This test measures your average blood glucose over the past 2 to 3 months. According to the ADA, an A1c test of greater than or equal to 6.5% could indicate diabetes*.

Fasting Plasma Glucose – This test checks your fasting blood glucose level. Fasting means not consuming food or drink (besides water) for at least 8 hours prior to the test. A fasting glucose of 126 mg/dl or higher indicates diabetes*.

Oral Glucose Tolerance Test – A test that checks your blood glucose levels before consuming a specific sweet drink and 2 hours after consumption. This lets a doctor know how your body processes sugar. A two-hour glucose tolerance test equal to or higher than 200 mg/dl indicates diabetes*.

Types of Diabetes

Diabetes can come in different forms, depending on the cause. A primary care provider can help a person manage this condition, but treatment options and/or health care specialists can vary.

Prediabetes - When your blood sugar is higher than it should be but not high enough for your doctor to diagnose it as diabetes. According to the National Institute of Health, blood sugar levels in people with prediabetes are between 110 mg/dL and 125 mg/dL*.

Type 1 Diabetes - Type 1 diabetes is also called insulin-dependent diabetes. This is an organ-specific autoimmune condition that happens when your body attacks your pancreas with antibodies. The organ is damaged and doesn't make insulin for the body to use.

Type 2 Diabetes - When you have type 2 diabetes, your pancreas usually creates some insulin, however it's not enough or your body doesn't use it like it should.

Gestational Diabetes – This type of a diabetes is found during pregnancy. For those individuals diagnosed with gestational diabetes, blood sugar control usually returns to a normal level soon after the baby is born.

Healthy Lifestyle Choices

There are many ways to prevent, manage, and live with diabetes while most importantly, keeping your blood sugars within your recommended range. Healthy eating is important for everyone, however with diabetes, you'll want to know how foods affect your blood sugar levels. With diabetes, regular physical activity helps your body use insulin more efficiently. Finally, the medicine your provider might prescribe is designed to lower blood sugar levels when diet and exercise aren't enough.

**With any health condition or diagnosis, always consult with your Health Care Provider about what your lab values and biometrics mean.*

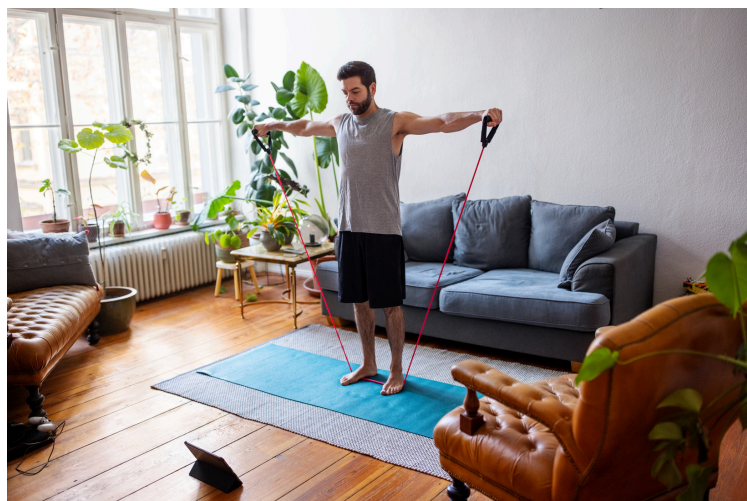
Men's Health

Diabetes has the tendency to be more prevalent in adult males versus females. According to the CDC, the prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in adults aged 65 and older is 24.4% for men and 12.6% for women. Additionally, a higher percentage of men (41.0%) than women (32.0%) had prediabetes, based on their fasting glucose or A1C level. This is just one of several specific challenges facing men when it comes to optimizing and maintaining their health. This is why it's critical that men of all ages recognize potential health risks and start taking precautions early on.

Prioritizing men's health in the U.S. has become more and more difficult to pursue. According to the U.S. Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health, U.S. men, on average, die nearly six years earlier than U.S. women. They're also at higher risk for serious illnesses, including heart disease, lung cancer and HIV. Currently in the U.S. 41.6% of men aged 20 and older are listed as obese and 50.5 % of men aged 18 and older are living with hypertension. Also, the percent of men 18 and older who have met the federal physical activity guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity only stands at 28.3%. Meanwhile, the two leading causes of death in men are heart disease and cancer.

Program Highlight: Managing Type 2 Diabetes

Have you been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes? If you want to understand what steps you can take to manage type 2 diabetes - this is the place to start. Keeping your blood sugar in a healthy range can help you feel your best, and reduce your risk of health complications associated with type 2 diabetes. This program will provide guidance on how you can take steps to manage your condition through a combination of a healthy diet, regular exercise, blood sugar monitoring, and medications (if prescribed to you by a health care provider). Go to your member app or website and explore the Program Library on the Journey tab to learn more.



Many of the important lifestyle changes that are listed are ways to manage diabetes and can work toward practicing healthy behaviors:

- Making healthy nutrition choices
- Avoiding excessive alcohol consumption
- Engaging in regular physical exercise
- Avoiding tobacco products
- Prioritizing mental health
- Managing stress
- Getting adequate and quality sleep
- See your PCP annually
- Be up to date with biometrics and immunizations
- Regular cancer screenings (colorectal, skin, oral, lung, and testicular)**

***The types of screenings you need and how often you should get them depends on your individual risk factors. Talk to your doctor during your preventive exam about what screenings are right for you.*

Many of the major health risks that men face can be prevented with regular cancer screenings and many of the healthy lifestyle habits listed above. Be sure to talk to your doctor about what fits best for you and how to maintain your health to be the best version of yourself.

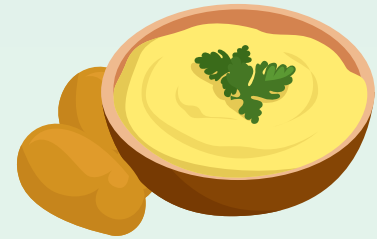
Don't be a statistic - get on board with protecting your health today!

November Recipe: Creamy Slow Cooker Mashed Potatoes

The best creamy slow cooker mashed potatoes infused with garlic. This healthy, lightened up version will be your family's new favorite mashed potato recipe!

Total Time: 4 hours 15 minutes

Servings: 10 servings



Ingredients:

- 5 pounds gold potatoes, diced (peeled or unpeeled, your choice)
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup chicken broth or vegetarian broth
- 1/3 cup softened butter (or vegan butter)
- 1/2 cup sour cream or whole milk greek yogurt
- 1/2-1 cup unsweetened almond milk, plus more to thin potatoes out if necessary (can also use skim milk or 2% milk)
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- To garnish: Extra butter, fresh thyme sprigs, freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

1. In a large 5 or 6 quart slow cooker add diced potatoes, minced garlic and broth. Cook on high for 3-4 hours until potatoes are very fork tender.
2. Once potatoes are done cooking, place slow cooker on warm setting and add in butter, sour cream and 1/2 cup of milk to start. Use a potato masher to mash potatoes until they reach your desired consistency. I happen to like my potatoes super creamy, so I mash them until they're completely smooth.
3. If you want your potatoes creamier, add in 1/2 cup-1 cup more milk. Finally, a generous amount of salt and pepper, then mix again. Taste and add more salt and pepper if necessary.
4. Transfer to a large warm casserole dish for serving, add a pat of butter, a sprinkle of fresh thyme, and a little freshly ground black pepper.



Stay tuned for December's topics:
Gratitude and Managing Seasonal Disorder

