

The 7 Best Meal Replacement Shakes for People With Diabetes

By Jenn Sinrich February 16, 2022

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The best meal-replacement shakes for people with diabetes are nutritious, filling, high in protein and low in carbs.

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Diabetes is one of the most common chronic health conditions in the U.S., affecting more than 30 million Americans, per [diabetes statistics](#). The condition occurs when a person's blood sugar, or glucose, becomes too high for the body to effectively break it down due to a lack of insulin production, explains [Vandana Sheth, RDN](#), registered dietitian nutritionist, certified diabetes care specialist and author of [My Indian Table](#).

In order to maintain healthy blood sugar levels, people with diabetes need to eat regularly and consistently, which is one of the reasons meal-replacement shakes have become so popular.

In addition to providing an on-the-go meal solution, most meal-replacement shakes are relatively low in carbohydrates and high in protein to help manage glucose levels and control overall caloric intake, explains [Nicole Avena, PhD](#), assistant professor of neuroscience at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, visiting professor of health psychology at Princeton University and author of [What to Eat When You Want to Get Pregnant](#).

"Carbohydrate tracking is essential for those with diabetes because carbohydrates turn into sugar once digested, which can make it difficult for people to know how to dose their insulin properly," Avena says. "Although homemade meals are always best, meal-replacement shakes are an easy way to get their nutrients in, in a carb-friendly way."

With that in mind, here are the best meal-replacement shakes for people with diabetes.

The Best Meal Replacement Shakes for People With Diabetes

- [Glucerna 30g Protein Shake](#) (\$32.97 for a 12-pack, Amazon.com)
- [310 Meal Replacement Shake](#) (\$66.99 for 28 servings, Amazon.com)
- [Garden of Life Keto Meal](#) (\$40.95 for 14 servings, Amazon.com)
- [Ample K](#) (\$76.50 for a 12-pack, AmpleMeal.com)
- [Atkins Gluten Free Protein-Rich Shake](#) (\$14.43 for a 12-pack, Amazon.com)
- [Splenda Diabetes Care Shake](#) (\$38.88 for a 24-pack, Amazon.com)
- [OWYN Plant-Based Protein Shake](#) (\$36.99 for a 12-pack, Amazon.com)

How We Chose

We chatted with registered dietitians and diabetes care specialists to get their expert perspective on the best meal-replacement shakes for people with diabetes and how to find the right product for you. We selected our top picks based on their professional recommendation and criteria including:

- Quality of ingredients
- Nutritional value
- Ability to fill you up
- Overall caloric content

Warning

If you have kidney disease or other kidney issues, talk to your doctor before adding meal-replacement shakes to your diet, as the high protein content in some of these shakes may not work for you.

1. Glucerna 30g Protein Shake



Image Credit: Glucerna

One common symptom associated with [type 2 diabetes](#) is wounds that have trouble healing, per the [National Institutes of Health](#). But a shake with high enough protein can help aid in wound healing, says [Laura Cipullo, RD](#), registered dietitian, certified diabetes care and education specialist and author of [Everyday Diabetes Meals for 1 or 2](#).

This shake is specifically designed for people with diabetes as a way to help manage carbohydrate intake and increase protein intake. "With only 150 calories, this particular shake is perfect for an on-the-go snack, but it should not be used to replace an entire meal," adds Cipullo.

Calories: 150 | **Carbohydrates:** 7 grams | **Protein:** 30 grams

Buy it: [Amazon.com](#) **Price:** \$32.97 for a 12-pack

2. 310 Meal Replacement Shake



Image Credit: 310

Although a bit more pricey, you get a greater value out of the packaging with this shake, which yields 28 individually packed servings that you can mix with water, milk or milk alternatives.

For those seeking a [plant-based protein](#), this is a great option, as it's made from a blend of brown rice protein, pea protein and hemp protein.

"With 15 grams of protein, 5 grams of fiber and 0 grams of added sugar, this shake will provide a fuller feeling than those with less protein and fiber," Roger Adams, PhD, personal trainer, doctor of nutrition and owner of [eatrightfitness](#), tells LIVESTRONG.com.

Calories: 90 | **Carbohydrates:** 7 grams | **Protein:** 15 grams

Buy it: [Amazon.com](#) **Price:** \$66.99 for 28 servings

3. Garden of Life Keto Meal



Image Credit: Garden of Life

This doctor-formulated meal-replacement shake is designed for someone following the [keto diet](#), but it can also be quite beneficial for people with diabetes, because going low-carb can help manage blood sugar levels.

Following keto principles, this shake is higher in fat than competitive shakes, which can also be beneficial for people with diabetes. One 2020 study in [BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care](#) found that eating a diet low in carbs and high in fat leads to greater A1C reduction and weight loss.

Calories: 280 | **Carbohydrates:** 5 grams | **Protein:** 16 grams

Buy it: [Amazon.com](#) **Price:** \$40.95 for 14 servings

4. Ample Complete Meal Shake



Image Credit: Ample

Ample created this meal-replacement shake with carb control in mind. "It has only 2 grams of sugar and 25 grams of protein, which is designed to slow sugar release into the bloodstream," Avena explains. It is higher in calorie content than others, so it's important to keep that in mind when factoring it into your overall daily amount.

One thing that sets this shake apart from the rest is the fact that it's infused with 40 billion probiotic bacteria from six different strains to help with digestion. A July 2020 study in [Scientific Reports](#) showed that probiotics had a beneficial effect on metabolism for people with diabetes.

Calories: 400 | **Carbohydrates:** 11 grams | **Protein:** 25 grams

Buy it: [AmpleMeal.com](https://www.AmpleMeal.com) **Price:** \$76.50 for a 12-pack

5. Atkins Gluten-Free Protein-Rich Shake



Image Credit: Atkins

The Atkins brand has long been recognized for its commitment to creating replacement shakes and bars that are low in carbohydrates and high in protein.

With just 2 grams of carbohydrates and 15 grams of protein, Avena points out that the macronutrient balance in this shake is ideal. "It also contains 5 grams of fiber for slower digestion and nutritional benefit," she says. "Fiber has been shown to help control blood sugar and cholesterol levels in the blood, which can help prevent diabetic complications."

Calories: 160 | **Carbohydrates:** 2 grams | **Protein:** 15 grams

Buy it: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com); **Price:** \$14.43 for a 12-pack

6. Splenda Diabetes Care Shake



Image Credit: Splenda

If you're looking for a meal-replacement shake that offers a lot of flavor while giving you the benefit of balanced nutrition, this is a great choice. It contains more protein than most shakes for fewer calories, but also has more carbohydrates than most as well.

Still, Sheth notes that the combination of the protein and fats helps manage blood sugar and reduce blood sugar spikes.

Calories: 170 | **Carbohydrates:** 15 grams | **Protein:** 16 grams

Buy it: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) **Price:** \$38.88 for a 24-pack

7. OWYN Plant-Based Protein Shake

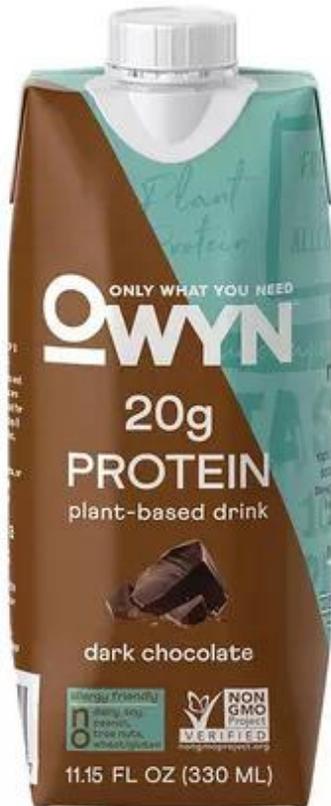


Image Credit: OWYN

In addition to containing a heaping serving of protein (20 grams), this vegan and gluten-free shake also delivers a blend of omega-3-rich ingredients that can provide heart-healthy benefits, notes Sheth.

It also delivers 9 essential amino acids as well as BCAAs (branched chain amino acids) which can be particularly beneficial for muscle recovery.

This rich protein shake is an ideal choice for someone following a vegan or vegetarian diet.

Calories: 180 | **Carbohydrates:** 10 grams | **Protein:** 20 grams

Buy it: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) **Price:** \$36.99 for a 12-pack

What to Know Before Buying a Meal-Replacement Shake

Before you shop for a meal-replacement shake to help manage your diabetes, here's what nutrition pros want you to know.

1. The Simpler the Ingredients, the Better

Simpler ingredients that are more natural will help with digestion and absorption of nutrients found in nutrient-dense shakes, Avena says. "Meal-replacement shake companies can use fillers and stabilizers to keep their formulas well mixed," she says.

She recommends looking for shakes that have short ingredient lists to keep shopping simple and to reduce unpleasant symptoms.

2. Meal-Replacement Shakes Should Only Be Supplemental

While there are plenty of benefits to these shakes, especially for those with diabetes, they should be a supplemental part of your diet, not the entire diet.

"While it may be OK to have more than one per day to replace a meal, you should still have at least one meal and a snack or two of regular solid foods," Adams says. "This keeps the gastrointestinal system in shape by making it work hard to digest those harder-to-digest solid foods."

3. Daily Value (DV) of Nutrients Matters

"Some meal-replacement products will range from 16 to 20 percent DV of nutrients, and this will provide more sufficient coverage of nutrients if you choose to consume the product rather than eat a meal," explains Colleen Johnson, RD, LDN, a registered dietitian nutritionist and adult diabetes educator at Joslin Diabetes Center.

4. Make Sure It Has Fewer Than 45 Grams of Carbs

"Women with type 2 diabetes need about 45 grams of carbohydrate per meal, while men can have about 60 grams of carbohydrate per meal," says Cipullo. "If your meal-replacement shake has 45 grams of carb or less, blood sugar management will be more attainable."

She recommends testing your blood sugar before you drink a given supplement and then two hours after drinking the shake to observe how your blood sugar responds to it.