



## **NHS Tayside Diabetes Managed Clinical Network Patient Information Leaflet**

### **Healthy Eating and Your Diabetes**

#### **Why is Healthy Eating Important?**

Healthy eating is important to everyone but is even more important if you have diabetes. This is because some foods that you eat will affect your blood glucose (sugar) levels.

#### **Does it cost any more?**

You can buy all the foods you need from ordinary shops and supermarkets. By cooking nutritious meals and avoiding higher priced ready meals or processed foods you can still eat healthily without it being expensive.

There is no need to buy special “diabetic” foods. They can have a laxative effect and will not help if you are trying to lose weight. Diabetic foods will still cause your blood glucose to rise.

#### **What Is Healthy Eating?**

##### **1. Eat regularly**

- Have 3 meals a day. For example, breakfast, lunch and evening meal. This will help keep your blood glucose levels steady and control your appetite.
- If you need to eat between meals to control your blood glucose levels then this should be healthy foods such as fruit, plain biscuits, a scone or toast with low fat spread.

## 2. Include a starchy carbohydrate food at each meal

High-fibre varieties that are low in sugar or fat are best. These are used by the body more slowly which will help control your blood glucose levels.

Starchy Carbohydrates High in Sugar or Fat	Choose Starchy Carbohydrates High in Fibre Low in Sugar or Fat
Sugar or honey-coated breakfast cereals, for example, Frosties, Coco Pops, sweetened muesli, most cereal bars	Wholegrain breakfast cereal, for example, Weetabix, unsweetened muesli, Shredded Wheat, Branflakes, porridge
Chips	Potatoes
	Lentils, beans, split peas, broth mix
	Rice, pasta, chapattis Wholemeal and wholegrain varieties of these are better
	Whole grain or granary bread

The preferred foods in the right hand column should be eaten in moderation.

### 3. Eat less sugar

- Sugar and foods containing sugar can cause the blood glucose to rise suddenly.
- It is best to replace these with *lower sugar* and *sugar free* foods instead. See the table below for examples.
- Providing your day-to-day eating is healthy, the occasional celebration meal will do no harm.
- If you are going to have something sugary, it is best to eat it just after a high fibre meal.

<b>Foods High in Sugar</b>	<b>Choose Foods Lower In Sugar/Sugar Free</b>
Sugar, glucose, glucose syrup, dextrose, sucrose, icing sugar, light spoon, half spoon	Artificial sweeteners, for example, Canderel, Sweetex, Hermesetas, Splenda
Sweet squash and fizzy drinks, for example, Ribena, Lucozade, cola, lemonade, drinking chocolate	Diet, low calorie, sugar-free squash and fizzy drinks, for example, Robinsons Special R, Diet Coke, Pepsi Max, tea, coffee, cocoa or low calorie chocolate drinks
Sweets, for example, chocolate, toffee, fudge, tablet, mints, chocolate covered and cream filled biscuits, marzipan	Plain biscuits or scone
Sugar-coated or honey-coated breakfast cereal, for example, Frosties, Sugar Puffs, Crunchy Nut cereals	Unsweetened breakfast cereal, for example, porridge, Weetabix, Branflakes, Cornflakes, Rice Krispies
Sweet pudding, for example, crumble, tarts, tinned fruit in syrup	Fresh or dried fruit Diet yoghurt, sugar-free jelly Tinned fruit in natural juice
Marmalade, jam, honey, syrup	Reduced sugar marmalade, jam

The preferred foods in the right hand column should be eaten in moderation.

#### 4. Eat less fried and fatty foods.

High fat diets are linked to heart disease and reducing your fat intake will help you lose weight.

<b>Foods High in Fat</b>	<b>Choose Foods Lower in Fat</b>
Butter, Margarine, oil, lard, dripping,	Low fat spread and oils made from unsaturated oils such as olive oil, sunflower oil, corn oil, monounsaturated or polyunsaturated spreads
Fried foods	Grill, poach, boil, microwave or oven bake food
Chips	Potatoes – boiled, steamed or baked
Pies, pastries, sausage rolls, fatty meat	Lean cuts of meat, fish and chicken without the skin
Creamy sauces and dressings	Tomato based sauces or low fat/"light" sauces
Cream, mayonnaise, salad cream, full fat yoghurt, full fat milk	Low fat natural yoghurt, low fat fromage frais, semi skimmed or skimmed milk
Full fat cheese	Reduced fat varieties of cheese, Lower fat cheese such as Edam, gouda, cottage cheese, grate or slice cheese thinly
Crisps, savoury snacks, nuts	Low fat, unsalted crisps or savoury snacks, Unsalted nuts.

The preferred foods in the right hand column should be eaten in moderation.

#### 5. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables

This will benefit your health and protect your heart

- Aim to eat 2-3 portions of fruit during the course of the day. All fruit is good for you including bananas, small quantities of grapes or dried fruit.
- Buy fresh fruit or fruit tinned in natural juice.
- Try to eat at least 2-3 portions of vegetables or salad every day.
- Use fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables.

## 6. Include oily fish

Oily fish contains a type of fat called omega 3, which helps protect against heart disease.

- Try to have oily fish in your diet at least twice a week.
- Examples are sardines, pilchards, salmon, mackerel, fresh tuna, herring.

## 7. Eat less salt

Too much salt can raise your blood pressure which can lead to stroke and heart disease.

- Avoid adding salt at the table.
- Use as little salt as possible in cooking.
- Use herbs and spices to flavour food instead.
- Avoid processed foods, tinned, packed foods, salty meats.
- **Do not use salt substitutes like LoSalt.**

## 8. Look at Food Labels

Looking at the label on food you buy and eat can help you decide whether the product contains a “little” or a “lot” of fat, sugar or salt.

This is a lot (per 100g)	This is a little (per 100g)
20g fat or more	3g fat or less
5g saturated fat or more	1.5 saturated fat or less
15g sugars or more	5g sugars or less
1.5g salt or more	0.3g salt or less

## 9. Healthy Weight

Body weight and diabetes are closely linked. If you are overweight it is harder for your body to use insulin properly. Losing small amounts of weight can help you to control your blood sugar level.

A healthy weight will also help:

- reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke
- control your blood pressure
- you look and feel good

Aim for a realistic weight loss (1-2lbs each week). It is better to lose a small amount of weight and keep it off, than to lose a lot of weight and regain it. If you are overweight it is important that you cut down on the amount of fatty foods you eat and think about your portion sizes.

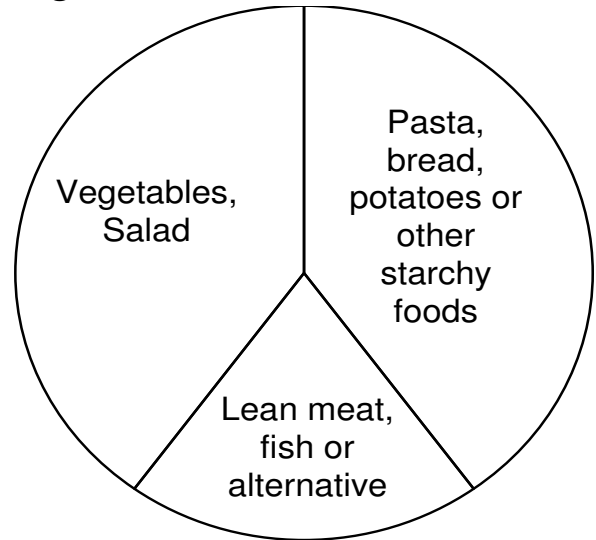
## 10. Portion Sizes

As well as looking at the types of food you eat it is important to consider your portion sizes, particularly if you are trying to lose weight.

You may need to change the proportions of food on your plate. As a first step you can use your plate as a guide,

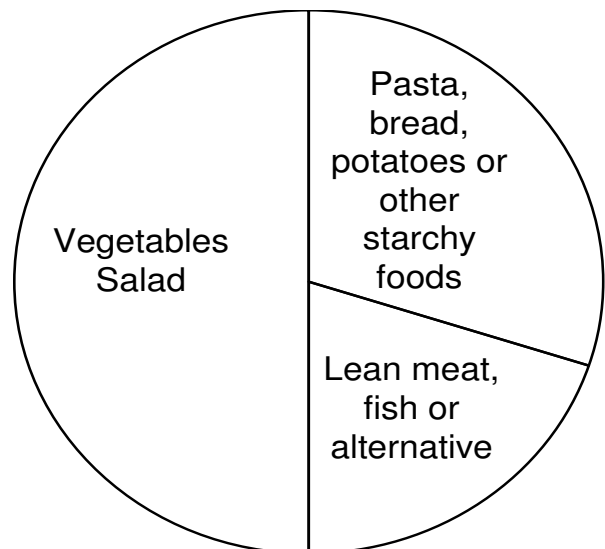
### If you are trying to maintain your weight

Try to divide your plate into some starchy carbohydrate foods, vegetables and lean meat, fish, beans or alternatives.



### If you are trying to lose weight

Eating less fatty foods will help you lose weight therefore have a smaller amount of lean meat, fish, beans or alternatives. Try to fill half your plate with vegetables and a smaller amount of starchy carbohydrate food.



## 11. Limit your alcohol intake

Most people with diabetes can enjoy an occasional alcoholic drink.

- The safe amounts of alcohol for people with diabetes and the general population are exactly the same.
- There are some precautions you should take. See the leaflet on **Alcohol and Your Diabetes** available from your diabetes team or from the Tayside Diabetes Managed Clinical Network website.

## 12. Maintain an active lifestyle

- Exercise helps improve your general health and your diabetes control.
- See the Leaflet on **Exercise and Your Diabetes** available from your diabetes team or from the Tayside Managed Clinical Network website.

### Top Tips for Healthy Eating for Your Diabetes

- Eat regularly, for example, breakfast, lunch and evening meal
- Eat less sugar
- Eat less fat and fatty foods
- Eat less salt
- Include bread, potatoes, cereals, rice, pasta or chapattis with your meals, but in moderation. Remember, as with all foods, if you eat more than your body needs you are likely to gain weight.
- Aim to include oily fish each week
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Look at food labels
- Aim to achieve a healthy weight
- Drink alcohol in moderation
- Maintain an active lifestyle

### Further Information

The **Tayside Diabetes Managed Clinical Network** website has a Patient Information section with a wide range of information. [www.diabetes-healthnet.ac.uk](http://www.diabetes-healthnet.ac.uk).

The NHS Scotland “**My Diabetes My Way**” website provides information on healthy eating for people with diabetes in a variety of formats including leaflets, videos and interactive store tours. [www.mydiabetesmyway.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.mydiabetesmyway.scot.nhs.uk)

**Diabetes UK** provides a variety of cookery books, recipes and other information for people with diabetes. Contact Diabetes UK on 0845 120 2960 or go to their website at [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk).

**This information has been produced by the Tayside Nutrition Network  
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