

## Healthy Eating and Your Diabetes

Healthy eating is important if you have diabetes because some foods that you eat will affect your blood glucose (sugar) levels. The rest of your family can join you in healthy eating too!

### What Is Healthy Eating?

#### Eat regularly

- Have 3 main meals a day i.e. breakfast, lunch and evening meal. This will help keep your blood glucose levels steady and control your appetite.

#### Eat less sugar

- Sugar and foods containing sugar can cause the blood glucose to rise suddenly.
- It is best to replace these with *low sugar* and *sugar free* foods instead.

| FOODS HIGH IN SUGAR   | FOODS LOW IN SUGAR/SUGAR FREE  |
|---|--|
| Sugar, glucose, glucose syrup, dextrose, sucrose, icing sugar, light spoon, half spoon                          | Artificial sweeteners, e.g. Canderel Sweetex, Hermaseta, Splenda   |
| Sweet squash and fizzy drinks<br>- e.g. Ribena, Lucozade, cola, lemondade, Drinking Chocolate                   | Diet and low calorie, sugar-free squash and fizzy drinks<br>- e.g. Robinsons Special R, Diet Coke, Pepsi Max, tea, coffee, cocoa or low calorie chocolate drinks |
| All sweets, e.g. Chocolate, toffee, fudge, tablet, mints, chocolate covered and cream filled biscuits, marzipan | Plain biscuits or scone<br>Sugar-free chewing gum and sweets   |
| Sugar-coated or honey coated breakfast cereal, e.g. Frosties, Sugar Puffs, Crunchy Nut cereals                  | Unsweetened breakfast cereal e.g. porridge, Weetabix, Branflakes, Cornflakes, Rice Krispies  |
| Sweet pudding e.g. crumble, tarts, tinned fruit in syrup  | Fresh or dried fruit<br>Diet yoghurt, sugar-free jelly<br>Tinned fruit in natural juice  |
| Marmalade, jam, honey, syrup  | Reduced sugar marmalade, jam   |

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 have it just after a high fibre meal.

**Include a starchy carbohydrate food at each meal. These foods will also help control your blood glucose levels.**

- Starchy foods include whole grain breakfast cereals, porridge, potatoes, rice, pasta, chapattis and whole grain or granary bread.
- Add lentils, beans, split peas or broth mix to home-made soups and stews.

**Cut down on fried and fatty foods. High fat diets are linked to heart disease and reducing your fat intake will help you lose weight.**

- Choose 'unsaturated' oils such as olive oil, sunflower oil or corn oil for cooking as they are better for your heart.
- Eat less butter, margarine, oil, lard, dripping, cheese and fatty meats.
- Choose monounsaturated or polyunsaturated spreads, for example, olive oil spread.
- Choose low fat dairy products e.g., skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low fat spreads or cheeses instead of the full fat versions.
- Remember low fat products still contain a lot of fat so don't be tempted to use twice as much!
- Cut fat off meat, take skin off chicken and have smaller helpings of meat, fish, eggs and cheese.
- Grill, poach, boil, microwave or oven bake food instead of frying.
- Watch out for hidden fat - eat fewer pies, sausage rolls, cakes, crisps and biscuits. Try and use tomato based sauces rather than creamy sauces and dressings.

**Include oily fish**

- Try to have at least 2 portions of oily fish per week. Oily fish contains a type of fat called omega 3, which helps protect against heart disease.
- Examples are sardines, pilchards, salmon, mackerel, fresh tuna, herring.

**Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables to benefit your health and protect your heart.**

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

**Eat less salt as too much salt can raise your blood pressure which can lead to stroke and heart disease.**

- Cut down salt gradually so that you can get used to the taste change. Adding herbs and spices instead can help.
- Use as little salt as possible in cooking. Try not to add more salt to your meal at the table.
- Cut down on processed foods such as tinned and packet foods, salty meats, crisps and salted nuts.

**Diabetic Foods will still cause your blood glucose to rise.**

You can buy all the foods that you need from ordinary shops and supermarkets. 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.

**SAMPLE MENU**

**Breakfast**

1 x Bowl porridge or wholegrain breakfast cereal e.g. Branflakes, Weetabix  
and/or  
1-2 slices wholegrain bread/toast/roll  
Fruit - fresh or tinned without sugar, or s mall glass of unsweetened fruit juice.

**Light Meal**

Soup  
2-4 slices bread or toast or 1-2 rolls or 1 x medium baked potato or 1-2 pitta bread  
Small portion lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs, cheese or baked beans.  
Large portion salad or vegetables.  
Fruit as for main meal.

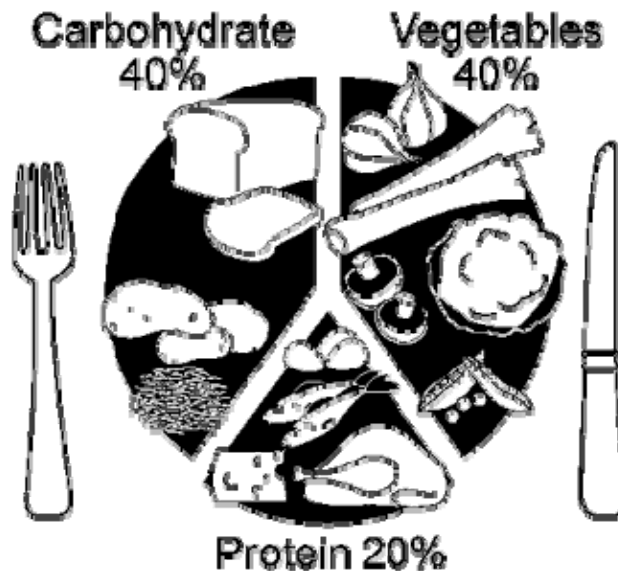
**Main Meal**

Soup e.g. broth, lentil, vegetable.  
Small portion lean meat, chicken or fish.  
2-4 small boiled potatoes or 2-4 slices bread or 3-6 tablespoons cooked pasta or  
2-4 tablespoons boiled rice or 1-2 chapattis.  
Large portion vegetables or salad.  
Fruit - fresh, stewed or tinned without sugar  
or unsweetened milk pudding or diet yoghurt.

## Healthy Eating for Your Diabetes

- Eat regularly i.e. three meals a day (breakfast, lunch & evening meal).
- Include bread, potatoes, cereals, rice, pasta or chapattis at every meal.
- Aim to reduce your sugar intake.
- Cut down on fat and fatty foods.
- Aim to have 2 portions of oily fish per week.
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables - at least five portions per day.
- Cut down on your salt intake.
- Drink alcohol in moderation only. – See Diabetes and Alcohol

Does your plate look like this?



**This information has been produced by the Tayside Nutrition and Dietetic Network Diabetes Group.**

### **Further Dietary Information**

Diabetes UK provides a variety of cookery books and other information for people with diabetes. Contact Diabetes UK at:

10 Parkway, London NW1 7AA

Tel 020 7424 1000, Fax 020 7424 1001

Website: [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

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