

DIABETES AWARE



Information Sheet 6a – Diabetes and Diet 2

Diabetes and Diet 2

What to eat or drink and what to avoid

This is only a broad guideline and people with diabetes may need to request individual dietary advice from a dietician

Carbohydrates

- Carbohydrates, found in starchy and sugary foods, will raise blood glucose levels.
- Foods containing different types of carbohydrate will raise blood glucose levels by different amounts and you need to have some idea about the carbohydrates you eat at each meal.
- You should try to have a food containing starchy carbohydrate at each meal, to help to ensure that your diet is healthy and well balanced.
- If you are on insulin, or some types of tablets, regular meals containing starchy carbohydrates will help prevent your blood glucose levels falling too low (hypoglycaemia)

Good carbohydrates

- Breakfast Cereals - Oat flakes, unsweetened muesli, Special K, Shredded wheat, Weetabix, Porridge
- Bread - wholemeal, granary, white or pitta bread
- High fibre crispbread or crackers
- Pasta or Noodles - all varieties
- Rice - all varieties including basmati, brown, white
- Potatoes - new, boiled, jacket potatoes
- The amount of starchy carbohydrate will vary for different people
- Young and active people will need good size portions of starchy foods and maybe snacks between meals.
People trying to lose weight will need less but should still include some starchy carbohydrate at each meal.

Fat

People with diabetes need to reduce their fat intake. There are a number of reasons for this including:

- Fatty foods are very high in calories and many people with diabetes need to lose weight. Reducing the amount of fat eaten will help.
- Disease of the blood vessels, including heart attacks/strokes, is more common in people with diabetes. Reducing the amount of saturated fat/trans-fatty acids eaten (hydrogenated vegetable fat in manufactured food and some margarine), will help reduce the risk of developing these diseases.

To reduce intake of fat

- Grill, bake, casserole, stew or microwave food – do not fry foods.
- Choose lean meat and cut off visible fat.
- Remove the skin from chicken.
- Eat more fish (not fried). Fish is a healthy low good alternative to meat.
- Reduce the amount of butter or margarine you use. If you do use a spread, choose a small amount of mono-unsaturated spread e.g. spreads based on olive oil.
- Use skimmed or semi skimmed milk (up to 1 pint a day).

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- Cut down on manufactured food and take-away food. These are rich in hidden fat e.g. chips, batter, pastry, biscuits, cakes, sausages, burgers and processed meat.
- Try using lemon juice, vinegar or low fat natural yoghurt instead of mayonnaise/salad cream.

Sugar

If you have diabetes, your body cannot cope with large amounts of sugary foods. The following list will help you cut down.

Sugary foods to avoid	Low sugar/sugar free alternatives
Sugar	Saccharin, Sweetex, Canderel, Hermesetas, Splenda.
Jam, marmalade, honey	Sugar free or low sugar jam or marmalade
Fizzy drinks, such as Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, lemonade, Lucozade, Red Bull	Low calorie sugar free or diet fizzy drinks e.g. diet Coke, diet Pepsi or diet lemonade
Fruit squash, fruit juice drinks such as J20, high amounts of sweetened fruit juice	Sugar free or no added sugar squash. Plain or fizzy water
Sweets or chocolate	Fresh fruit, sugar free chewing gum
Cakes, sweet biscuits	Plain biscuits, e.g. rich tea, digestive, garibaldi, oatcakes, cream crackers, Hobnobs
Fruit in syrup, sweet puddings	Fresh fruit, tinned fruit in natural juice. Low fat, low sugar yoghurt, e.g. Weight Watchers, Shape, 'Healthy Eating' brands
Sugary breakfast cereals - Crunchy Nut Cornflakes, Frosties, Cornflakes, Rice Crispies	Porridge, Branflakes, Weetabix, Oatibix, Shredded Wheat, Coco Pops, Special K.

Alcohol

- Most people with diabetes can enjoy a small amount of alcohol, unless advised otherwise by their doctor.
- If you are trying to lose weight, limit your alcohol intake to one drink or less a day, because alcohol contains a lot of calories. Excessive amounts of alcohol increase blood pressure and some unhealthy fats in the blood.
- People on insulin will need additional advice about alcohol.
- Everyone is different so you may need to find out from your doctor or diabetes nurse, the maximum daily and weekly alcohol intake, which is recommended for you.

Fruit and Vegetables

- Fruit and vegetables are good for your health.
- Aim to have 5 servings every day.
- Try to have some vegetables or salad at lunch and at supper.
- All fresh fruit is suitable for people with diabetes. It is low in calories and makes a healthy pudding or snack.
- There is however some natural sugar in all fruit so it is best to limit fruit to 3-4 portions a day. Have one portion at a time and spread your fruit intake over the whole day.
- Examples of 1 portion of Fruit: 1 apple, 1 orange, 1 peach, 1 small banana, 2 plums, 1 small bowl of strawberries.