



## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

### **Eating Well with Diabetes**

When you have diabetes, the level of sugar in your blood is too high. The main ways to control this, and keep yourself well, are to:

1. Eat regular meals containing starchy foods (carbohydrates) throughout the day - do not miss meals. Have breakfast, mid-day and evening meals.
2. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
3. Include regular activity in your lifestyle.
4. Aim for at least 5 portions a day of fruit, vegetables and salad.
5. Cut down on fried and fatty foods.
6. Eat less sugar, sugary foods and drinks.
7. Eat less salt.
8. Drink alcohol in moderation only.

**Specialist diabetic foods are not recommended.  
They are expensive, often high in fat and calories  
and can have a laxative effect.**

#### **Eat Regular Meals Containing Carbohydrate Foods throughout the Day**

All starchy carbohydrates such as bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, and cereals are suitable but the best carbohydrate choices are those listed below:

<b>Carbohydrate food</b>	<b>Best choices</b>
<b>Breakfast cereals</b>	Porridge, unsweetened muesli, Special K®, All Bran®, Fruit n' Fibre®
<b>Bread</b>	Granary, multigrain, pitta, rye.
<b>Potatoes</b>	New, boiled and Sweet potato
<b>Pasta and noodles</b>	All types
<b>Rice</b>	Basmati
<b>Pulses and grains</b>	Beans, including baked beans, peas, including chickpeas, lentils, buckwheat, bulgar wheat.

If you are overweight, losing weight will help to improve your blood sugar control. To lose weight, you need to take in less energy (calories) as food, and burn up more energy by being more active. To cut down the calories from food:

- Choose a low-fat diet (see over).
- Watch your portion sizes.
- It is important to limit your portions of foods containing protein:
- Only have protein foods at two meals per day;
  - Meat or fish 100 g (3-4 oz uncooked weight)
  - 30g (1 oz) hard cheese
  - ½ large tin baked beans or 1 – 2 eggs
- Try not to eat in between meals. If you are hungry, choose fruit or diet yogurt.
- If you like puddings, choose low-calorie options, such as fruit, diet yoghurts, sugar-free jelly.
- Keep alcohol to a minimum
- Follow the activity advice on the next sheet

### **Include Regular Activity in your Lifestyle**

This is one of the best things you can do to help keep yourself healthy. Among other benefits, it will help to lower your blood sugars and to control your weight.

You should aim for 30 minutes of moderate activity 5 days per week (for example brisk walking/swimming/golf). Start gradually and build up to these levels if you are not used to it.

### **Aim for at least 5 portions a day of fruits, vegetables and salad**

These contain good quantities of fibre, are low in fat and are also high in vitamins and minerals, which are important for long-term health. The aim is to eat 2 – 3 portions of fruit and at least 2 – 4 portions of vegetables or salad per day – the more variety the better.

The following table gives examples of what is meant by a portion:

<b>Half a grapefruit or mango</b>
<b>One apple, pear, small banana, orange, slice of melon, peach, handful of grapes, cherries</b>
<b>Two clementines, satsumas, kiwi, cupful of berry fruit</b>
<b>2 heaped tablespoons of vegetables, including pulses</b>
<b>Small bowl of salad</b>
<b>Small glass of unsweetened fruit juice (maximum 1 per day taken with meals)</b>

Remember:

- Because fruit contains natural sugars, it is a good idea to limit your total daily fruit intake to no more than 3 portions, spread out over the day.
- Take care not to overcook vegetables – this can destroy the vitamin and mineral content.
- Choose tinned fruit in juice, rather than syrup.
- The nutrient content of frozen vegetables is just as good as fresh.
- All fruits can be eaten. There is no reason to exclude grapes, cherries or bananas if eaten in the quantities given in the table.

### **Cut Down on Fried and Fatty Foods**

We all need to be careful about the amount of fat we eat, as a high fat intake may increase our risk of heart disease and strokes. This is especially important if you have Diabetes.

#### **To cut down on fat:**

- Where fat is needed for cooking or spreading, those high in mono-unsaturates are better, for example olive oil and rapeseed oils and spreads. Use sparingly. Using an oil spray or drizzler will help
- Grill, casserole, microwave or bake foods rather than fry
- Choose lean meat, chicken or turkey (no skin). Keep portions of meat small. Limit fatty meats, for example luncheon meat, sausages, pate, etc.
- Use semi-skimmed or skimmed milk.
- Eat less cheese – try to keep to 100g/4 oz per week. Alternatively, try lower fat versions - you could eat slightly more of these, for example Edam, low fat cream cheese, half fat cheddar.
- Try dry roasting potatoes and oven chips.
- Choose low-fat salad creams, mayonnaises, salad dressings and sauces wherever possible. Use small amounts, for example 1 teaspoon per serving.
- Cut down on pastry, dumplings, crisps, nuts and similar snacks.

**Try to eat fish frequently. Oily fish, for example fresh tuna (not tinned) sardines, pilchards, mackerel, salmon (including tinned varieties) good for you – try to have 1 - 2 portions per week.**

## **Eat Less Sugar, Sugary Foods and Drinks**

Sugar does not need to be excluded completely from your diet if you have diabetes – however, it is important to avoid those foods and drinks that will cause a rapid rise in your blood sugar levels.

Remember – high sugar foods are often high in calories and not helpful if trying to lose weight.

- Use sweeteners, for example Canderel®, Sweetex®, Hermesetas®, Splenda® in hot drinks in place of sugar.
- Use diet and 'no added sugar' varieties of squash and fizzy drinks instead of ordinary versions. Avoid glucose drinks.
- Use tinned fruit in natural juice rather than syrup.
- Sugar free jelly can be a good low calorie pudding
- Avoid sugar-coated breakfast cereals, for example frosted flakes, chocolate flavoured, sugar puffs and hoops cereals.
- Bedtime drinks, such as Horlicks®, Ovaltine® and drinking chocolate (including low-fat varieties) are high in sugar. Diet versions, such as Highlights® and Options® are fine. Avoid Camp Coffee® and coffee whiteners.
- Choose reduced sugar versions of jams and marmalades, and spread thinly.

**Beware – low-fat cakes and puddings often have high sugar and calorie content and should be avoided.**

## **Eat less salt**

It is advisable to reduce your salt intake, as there is a link between salt and high blood pressure. To prevent or help treat existing high blood pressure:

- Use less salt in cooking and try not to add salt at the table.
- Cut down on salty foods and drinks, for example tinned, packet and processed foods, stock cubes, yeast and beef extract, crisps and nuts. Look for lower salt versions.
- Bought soups are high in salt – try making your own.
- Instant noodle and pasta pots, flavoured rice and instant couscous are all high in salt and should be avoided.
- Use herbs, spices, pepper, onion, garlic and lemon juice to flavour your food instead of salt.

**Salt substitutes are not recommended for people with diabetes. It is better to adapt your taste buds to having less salt.**

## **Keep alcohol to safe levels**

- If you usually drink alcohol – limit it to 3 units per day for men and 2 units per day for women.  
*1 unit = ½ pint of ordinary strength beer, lager or cider,  
1 small glass of wine or 1 pub measure of spirits.*
- Try to choose dry or medium drinks rather than sweet varieties, for example wine, sherry, ciders.
- Be aware that alcopops, for example WKD®, Bacardi Breezers®, Smirnoff Ice® and cream liqueurs, for example Baileys® and Irish Mist® are high in sugar as

well as alcohol and, therefore, not good choices.

- Remember to use sugar-free/'diet' mixers.
- Avoid "binge" drinking. Try to have at least 2 alcohol-free days a week.
- Never drink alcohol on an empty stomach.

**Alcohol is high in calories and should be limited if you are trying to lose weight.**

## **Ideas for meals**

### **Breakfast**

- Porridge – try it topped with fresh or dried fruits
- Granary bread or toast with monounsaturated spread and reduced sugar jam or marmalade
- Grapefruit followed by granary toast
- Unsweetened muesli with low-fat milk or low-fat natural yoghurt

### **Main Meals**

- Lean meat or fish with vegetables and new potatoes
- Chicken and bean casserole with basmati rice
- Chilli con Carne with basmati rice and side salad
- Spaghetti Bolognese with side salad
- Grilled salmon, new potatoes and stir-fry vegetables

### **Snack Meals**

- Baked beans on granary toast
- Lentil soup and granary bread
- Tinned fish with salad and granary bread
- Sandwiches, for example ham and salad, cottage cheese and pineapple, egg and tomato, tuna and cucumber
- Pitta bread filled with salad and lean meat

### **Puddings**

- Fresh fruit
- Stewed fruit
- Baked apple
- Tinned fruit in natural juice
- Diet or lite yoghurts or fromage frais
- Sugar-free jelly with added fruit
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