Children and Young People with Type 2 Diabetes

Paediatric Diabetes Department

Healthy eating and Diabetes

There is no specific diet for diabetes but the foods you eat not only make a difference to how you manage your diabetes, but also to how well you feel and how much energy you have.
This information leaflet will help you get to know the main food groups that make up a healthy, balanced eating pattern.

A healthy eating pattern does not necessarily mean restriction, but a shift of emphasis onto foods that will supply your nutritional needs and control blood glucose levels. It is better to make small changes you can stick to rather than big changes that you cannot.

Diabetes and Weight control

If you are overweight, losing between 5-10% of your body weight can help to:

- ✓ Improve blood glucose levels
- ✓ Lower high blood pressure
- ✓ Lower cholesterol levels
- ✓ Reduce joint pain and lower back pain
- ✓ Improve breathing and sleep patterns
- ✓ Improve self-esteem

Weight loss can be achieved by reducing portion sizes and becoming more active.

What is a healthy diet for me?

1) **Choose modest portions of unprocessed starchy carbohydrate foods at each meal** - Bread, potatoes, breakfast cereals, rice, pasta or chapatti. The quantity of carbohydrates consumed will depend on your activity levels and weight.

2) **Choose low Glycaemic Index (GI) foods -** All carbohydrates break down to glucose in the bloodstream but some do so faster than others.

Those that breakdown quickly and cause a rapid rise in blood glucose are referred to as **high GI**, while those that take longer to digest are **low GI**. Give preference to high fibre carbohydrates as these tend to have a lower GI. Other factors can also have an effect on the absorption of carbohydrate so it is important to consider the overall balance of your diet. Remember, from a blood glucose perspective, the portion size of these foods are important and should be relative to your activity levels.

3) **Low to moderate GI foods include:**
   - Granary, seeded or stoneground breads,
   - Wholemeal pitta bread.
   - Wholegrain cereals, e.g. Oat bran flakes, rolled oats (porridge), Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, unsweetened muesli
   - New potatoes or sweet potatoes
   - Basmati/wild rice, pasta made from durum wheat
   - Wholemeal biscuits, e.g. crackers, crispbreads, low fat digestives

4) **Fruit and Vegetables -** Aim for at least 5 portions of vegetable and fruit daily: green and root vegetables, salad and fresh, frozen or tinned fruit in natural juice or stewed with added sweetener.

   REMEMBER….unsweetened fruit juice increases blood glucose levels so limit to one small glass per day with a meal.

5) **Legumes -** These have less effect on blood glucose and may help control blood fats; dried beans, tinned beans, lentils, chickpeas and baked beans are high in fibre, nutritious and can be used in a wide variety of savoury dishes.

FRUIT	**PORTION SIZE**
Very large fruit - e.g. melon, pineapple	1 slice
Large fruit - e.g. grapefruit, mango	Half of the fruit
Medium fruit - e.g. apple, banana, orange	1 whole fruit
Small fruit – e.g. satsumas, plums, kiwi	2 fruits
Very small fruit – e.g. grapes, berries	Handful of fruit
Dried fruit – e.g. raisins, prunes	1 tablespoon
Cooked or canned fruit in juice	2 tablespoons
Fruit Juice	150ml/day
VEGETABLES	**PORTION SIZE**
Cooked vegetables	2 tablespoons
Mixed salad	1 dessert bowl
Pulses– e.g. kidney beans, chick peas	3 tablespoons

6) **Sugar -** Aim to eat less sugary food (no need to have a sugar free diet). A small amount of sugar is added to some foods, e.g. breakfast cereals & baked beans, but these foods can be included and eaten as part of a healthy diet.

Alternatives to foods high in sugar are:

HIGH SUGAR FOODS	ALTERNATIVES ☺
Sugar, glucose, fructose syrup	Artificial sweeteners, e.g. Canderel, Hermesetas, Sweetex, Splenda
Squashes, cordials, fizzy and cola drinks	Sugar free and low calorie squashes, diet fizzy drinks and slim-line drinks
Fruit yoghurts	Diet fruit yoghurt, low fat natural/Greek yoghurt
Jam, marmalade, syrup, honey	Reduced sugar jams / marmalades, pure fruit Spreads (not "diabetic")
Sweet puddings, tinned fruit in syrup	Sugar free milk puddings / custard, (home made with semi-skimmed milk and sweetener) fruit tinned in natural juice, sugar free jelly or dessert mixes
Sugar/chocolate/honey coated breakfast cereal	Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, porridge, oatbran
Sweets and chocolate	Fresh fruit
Drinking chocolate, malted milk drinks incl. Light Horlicks	Low calorie drinks e.g. Options, High Lights, cocoa sweetened with artificial sweetener
Chocolate biscuits, cream biscuits	Plain biscuits e.g. wholemeal crackers, crispbreads 1-2 digestives or rich tea biscuits
Rich cakes e.g. iced and chocolate cakes, gateaux	Small slice of: malt loaf, tea bread, currant loaf or a small wholemeal scone

7) **Fats -** Fats are a concentrated source of energy and controlling their intake helps weight control.

There are two main types of fat - **saturated** and **unsaturated**.

- **Saturated** fats tend to be of animal origin, e.g. meat fat, dairy products such as butter and cheese.
- **Unsaturated** fats are either monounsaturated or polyunsaturated and from a non-animal source.

Sources of polyunsaturated fat include oily fish, corn oil and sunflower oil. Even better, try the monounsaturated fats such as olive oil, rapeseed oil or peanut oil. Whichever oil you use, remember that **all** oils are high in fat and therefore high in calories.

How can I reduce my fat intake?

- ✓ Avoid frying – instead grill, steam, bake or microwave.
- ✓ Use less butter, margarine, lard and oil. Spread thinly or try a low fat spread or spray oil e.g. Fry Light.
- ✓ Try semi-skimmed or skimmed milk and the lower fat cheeses, e.g. reduced fat or half-fat hard cheese, low fat cheese spreads or cottage cheese. Grating cheese makes it go further- a portion is a (small) matchbox size piece.
- ✓ Choose lean meat and chicken without the skin, rather than sausages, burgers, and pies.

- ✓ Poach or bake fish rather than fry. Fish in batter is high in fat.
- ✓ Ready prepared meals - choose healthy options, e.g. Lean Cuisine, Weight Watchers, supermarket own brands.

Oily Fish - REMEMBER… Oily fish e.g. herring, mackerel, sardines, fresh tuna, pilchards, trout or salmon are healthy and should be included twice weekly.

Useful websites and resources

British Dietetic Association
https://www.bda.uk.com/
Diabetes UK
https://www.diabetes.org.uk/
NHS Website
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-2-diabetes/

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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