



HEALTHY EATING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DIABETES

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Diabetes can be successfully managed by means of a healthy lifestyle, which includes exercise and balanced nutrition, combined with medication, blood glucose monitoring and self-care education.

GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY LIVING:

- Eat meals at regular intervals – never skip a meal.
- Enjoy a variety of foods.
- Be active:
 - Individuals with type 1 diabetes should adjust their insulin dosage before they exercise. An additional snack may be needed for unplanned exercise.
 - Individuals with type 2 diabetes should exercise at least 150 min per week at moderate intensity (50–70% of maximum heart rate) or 90 min per week at high intensity (> 70% of maximum heart rate). Distribute your exercise over at least three days per week, with no more than two consecutive days without physical activity.
- Make starchy foods the basis of most meals. Emphasise whole grains, high-fibre cereals and whole-grain bread, or low-GI (glycemic index) bread.
- Use fats sparingly. Choose skim or low-fat dairy products, low-fat margarine, leaner meats, and prepare foods with little or no added fat/oil.
- Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit. Rather choose fruit than fruit juice.
- Eat cooked dry beans, peas, lentils and soya often.
- Meat, fish, chicken and milk may be eaten in moderate amounts daily. Choose leaner cuts of meat and remove the skin from chicken before cooking. Eat fish at least two to three times per week. Choose naturally oily fish, eg, tuna, sardines, pilchards and salmon. Grill or steam rather than fry fish. Limit eggs to two per week to reduce cholesterol intake.
- Use salt sparingly. Spices and herbs without added sodium and/or monosodium glutamate (MSG) can be used.
- Drink lots of clean, safe water.
- If you drink alcohol, drink sensibly (no more than one drink per day for women; up to two drinks per day for men). One drink constitutes 340 ml beer, 150 ml wine or 45 ml distilled spirits. Never drink on an empty stomach – if you choose to consume alcohol, combine the drink with your meal or snack.
- Sugar and sugar-containing foods are best eaten in moderate amounts as additions to healthy snacks and meals. Care should be taken to cover the carbohydrate provided by these foods with insulin or glucose-lowering medications.
- Strive to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight or obese, just losing 5–10% of your current body weight will improve your blood glucose and blood lipid control.
- A registered dietician can help you fine-tune the balance between your food intake and your insulin and/or glucose-lowering medications.

