



**Wolverhampton  
Diabetes Care**

## **Eating well with diabetes**

### **How will this booklet help me?**

The information in this booklet will help you to control your diabetes by giving you information on how to eat a healthy balanced diet. These changes will also help to control your weight which is also important for good diabetes control.

### **What is diabetes?**

Diabetes is a condition in which the amount of glucose (sugar) in your blood is too high because your body cannot use it properly. If you have Type 2 diabetes your body is either not producing enough insulin or the insulin that is being produced is not working properly (insulin resistance). If you have Type 1 diabetes your body has stopped making insulin and you will need to have insulin injections. Insulin is a hormone which helps remove glucose from the blood to be used by other cells for energy. How is blood glucose (sugar) made?

Glucose is made when you eat foods and drinks containing carbohydrate. The body uses it for energy.

### **What is carbohydrate?**

Carbohydrate is found in:

- Starchy foods such as bread, potatoes, pasta, chapattis/roti's yam, rice, couscous, breakfast cereals.
- Milk and yoghurt
- Fruit and fruit juices
- Sugar and sugary foods

Carbohydrate from starchy foods, fruit and dairy foods cause your blood glucose to rise slowly whilst sugary foods and drinks cause your blood glucose to rise high very quickly.

### **How do I change the way I eat?**

The most important changes to make first are:

- Eat regular meals – breakfast, light meal and main meal.
- Include a starchy carbohydrate food at each meal. It is important to eat similar amounts of carbohydrate from day to day.
- Eat salad and/or vegetables and fruit each day.
- Cut down on sugar, sugary foods and drinks.
- Eat less fat and fatty foods

Start making small changes you feel you can keep to and gradually make other changes when you are ready to.

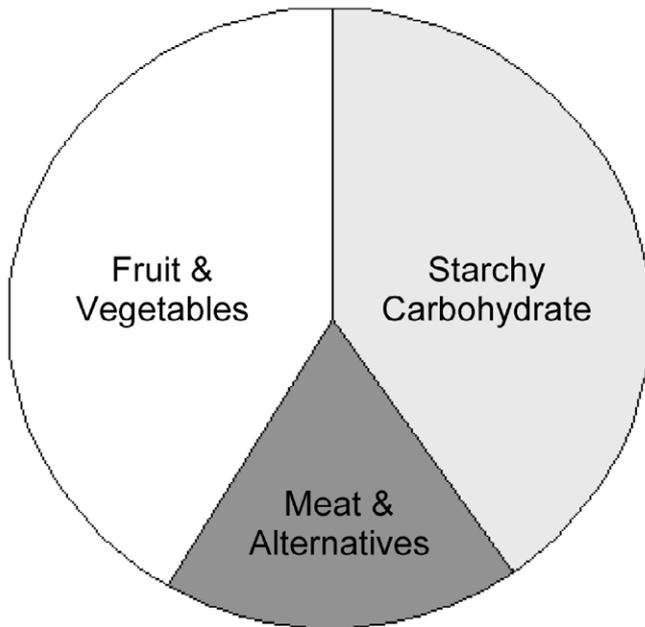


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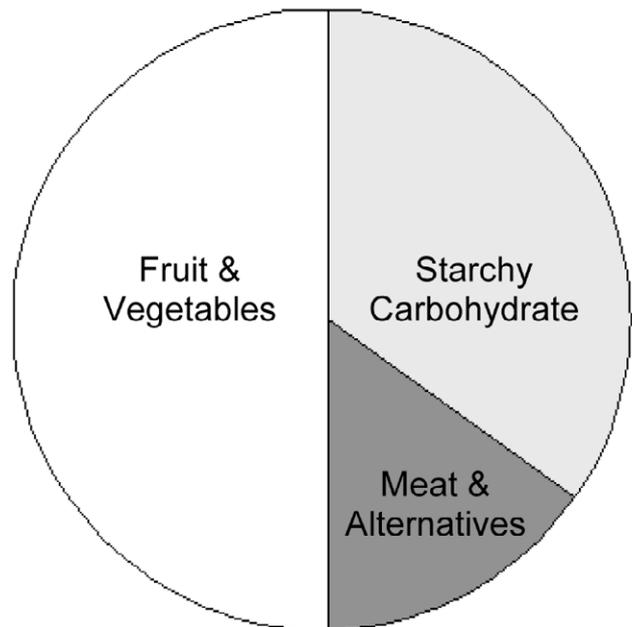
## Getting a healthy balance

Aim to make your plate of food look like this to help you eat a healthy balance of food:

**To maintain your weight**



**To lose weight**



Reduce starchy foods  
Increase Fruit and Vegetables



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## How to cut down on sugar and sugary foods

| High sugar foods                                     | Choose these low sugar foods  |
|--|---|
| Sugar  | Artificial sweeteners e.g. Canderel, Sweetex, Hermesetas or Splenda.  |
| Ordinary fruit squash, fruit drinks and fizzy drinks | No added sugar, low calorie, Slimline, diet or sugar free varieties. Pure fruit juices are high in natural sugars so limit to one small glass per day with a meal.                    |
| Jam, marmalade, syrup, treacle, honey ,lemon curd    | Reduced sugar jams, marmalade and pure fruit spreads or use small amounts of ordinary jams and marmalades.  |
| Sweet puddings                                       | Sugar free jelly, diet yoghurts e.g. Shape, Diet Ski, Muller Light, diet fromage frais reduced fat and sugar milk puddings, fruit in natural juice.                                   |
| Cakes and sweet biscuits                             | Plain biscuits e.g. Rich Tea, arrowroot, ginger-nuts, garibaldi, currant loaf, malt loa, teacakes, scones, crumpets, low-sugar home-made cakes, rice cakes, crispbreads and oatcakes. |
| Sugar, honey or chocolate coated cereals             | Weetabix, porridge, Shredded Wheat, Bran-flakes, All Bran, Fruit and Fibre, no added sugar muesli.  |



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|   |   |
|---|---|
| Sweets and chocolates   | Fresh fruit. (A small amount of ordinary chocolate can be taken at the end of a meal occasionally). Low calorie chocolate drinks (see below) often satisfy the need for a taste of chocolate. |
| Drinking Chocolate, Horlicks, Ovaltine and other sweetened bedtime drinks | Low calorie bedtime drinks e.g. Options, Highlights or Cocoa (with a sweetener, if necessary).  |

### **How will the sugar found in some processed foods affect diabetes control?**

The small amounts of sugar in savoury foods such as ketchups, pickles, baked beans and soups will not be enough to have a harmful effect on your blood glucose levels.

### **Are sweeteners safe?**

Intense low-calorie sweeteners such as Hermesetas, Splenda, Sweetex and Canderel are safe to use and can be a useful alternative to sugar. They will not have an effect on your blood sugar levels and are useful if you are trying to lose weight. Many sweeteners now come in granulated forms so they can be used in cooking or baking as well.

### **What is a lot of sugar?**

When looking at food labels, the ingredients are listed in order of weight, starting with the largest ingredient and ending with the smallest. If added sugar appears near the beginning of the list the amount will be a lot and if it appears at the end there will be a little.

There are several different names for added sugar. These include:

sucrose, glucose, glucose syrup, invert syrup, maltose and honey.

When looking at food labels, the amount of sugar includes natural sugar from fruit and milk. The guidelines for sugar per 100g are:

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| A lot of sugar | A little sugar |
| 15g or more    | 5g or less     |

Eat sweet foods only occasionally and as part of a meal.



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## **What about diabetic cakes, biscuits and chocolates?**

These are not recommended. They are expensive, high in calories and will not help your diabetes. A small amount of sweet food after a meal very occasionally will not be harmful.

Be careful with sugar free sweets and chewing gum as the sweetener used in these products e.g. sorbitol, isomalt can have a laxative effect. Have only in small quantities.

## **How to eat less fat in the diet.**

Saturated fats (butter, animal fats) are linked to heart disease, so it is a good idea to try to reduce these in your diet. Unsaturated fats and oils are better for your heart, especially mono-unsaturated fats (olive oil and olive-based spreads, rapeseed oil). Fat is the greatest source of calories so it is a good idea to cut down, especially if you are trying to lose weight. Tips for cutting down are:

- Use all fats, oils and coconut milk sparingly.
- Choose lean meats and trim off the excess fat. Remove the skin from chicken.
- Choose low fat dairy products such as skimmed or semi skimmed milk, low fat cheeses, low fat yoghurts.
- Cut down on pastries, dumplings and fritters
- Eat less fatty snacks such as crisps, scratchings and cheese biscuits such as Ritz and Cheddars.
- Do not fry foods. Grill, steam, boil or bake instead

Be careful with some foods labelled low fat as they may contain a lot of sugar for example low fat biscuits and cakes.

## **What is a lot of fat?**

When looking at food labels you can compare the fat content of different varieties of the same product by looking at the amount of fat per 100g. This will help you to choose a variety with less fat especially saturated fat.

When looking at food labels, the guidelines for fat are:

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| A lot of fat | A little fat |
| 20g or more  | 3g or less   |

Aim to choose foods which contain more of the fat as unsaturates and less as saturates with less than 10g of fat per serving most of the time.

## **What about fibre?**

Fibre is also known as roughage. There are two types of fibre, soluble fibre and insoluble fibre. Both types of fibre are beneficial to your health as they help fill you up and control your appetite.

- Soluble fibre is found in beans, pulses, oats, fruit and vegetables. This type of fibre helps to control your blood glucose levels
- Insoluble fibre is found in wholegrain cereals and bread, beans, fruit and vegetables. This type of fibre helps keep your digestive system healthy and prevents constipation.

How can I include five portions of fruit and vegetables a day?

- Fruit and vegetables provide you with vitamins, minerals and fibre which are important for health. They are low in calories, filling and the fibre helps to control your diabetes.
- Aim to have three portions of fruit and two or more portions of vegetables each day. (See the portion guide on page 10)
- Fruit is a convenient snack or pudding. A chopped banana or dried fruit can be added to a breakfast cereal for natural sweetness.
- Fruit contains natural sugar and will affect your blood glucose if eaten in large amounts. Have one portion at a time and spread out over the day.
- Aim to cover one third or more of your plate with vegetables. Add vegetables to stews and casseroles, pasta sauces, extra toppings on pizza. Include salad in your sandwich.



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- Add beans and lentils to stews, casseroles, soups or salads for extra fibre.

Are there any other foods I should eat for good health?

- Eat a variety of foods containing protein, such as lean meat, poultry and fish to cover one third of your plate.
- Aim to include fish up to three times or more each week. Try to have oily fish such as pilchards, sardines, mackerel and salmon twice a week as these help to protect against heart disease.
- If you are vegetarian, suitable meat alternatives are beans, lentils, Quorn, tofu, soya and nuts.
- Choose wholemeal or whole grain varieties of bread, pasta and rice.

A word about salt.

Too much salt in your diet can lead to high blood pressure. Most of the salt in your diet will come from tinned and packaged foods. Ways to cut down are:

- Use less in cooking.
- Do not add salt at the table.
- Use pepper, herbs, spices, lemon juice and vinegar to add or enhance the flavour of food.
- Cut down on processed foods such as tinned and packaged foods, crisps, salted nuts, chevda, soups, stock cubes and sauces.

When looking at food labels, the guidelines for salt per 100g are:

| A lot of salt   | A little salt   |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1.5g or more    | 0.3g or less    |
| (0.6 as sodium) | (0.1 as sodium) |

## **What can I drink?**

Water is the best drink and satisfies thirst. You can also drink tea and coffee with no sugar, and low calorie/no added sugar/ diet squashes and fizzy drinks. Include a variety to make sure you have enough to drink throughout the day – about one and a half litres or three pints.

You can still drink alcohol but in moderation only. That is no more than two units a day for women and three units a day for men. Do not save up your units and have all at once, as this is not good for your health.

1 unit is:

- 1 glass (125ml) of wine
- Half a pint beer
- One pub measure (25ml) of spirits

Drinking alcohol on an empty stomach can cause people on certain medications to become hypoglycaemic (have low blood glucose levels), so it is important to drink with or soon after a meal. You should have two to three alcohol free days a week. Alcohol is also high in calories so you should cut down if you need to lose weight.

How much can I eat?

Everyone's needs are different. A good way to help you get the right amount and variety of foods in your diet is to think about how many portions you normally eat. See how it compares with the guide given next. If you need to lose weight, cutting down on fat and sugar and keeping starchy carbohydrate portions to 7-8 portions per day is advised. If you would like more help or advice with this, please ask your doctor or nurse to refer you to a dietitian.



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## Food groups and what's in a portion

Starchy carbohydrates – 7 to 14 portions/day.

One portion is:

- 2-4 tbsp breakfast cereal
- One slice medium bread/half a small chapati/roti
- 2-3 crispbreads or crackers
- 2-3 tbsp. cooked rice, pasta, couscous
- One medium potato/half a small jacket potato
- Half a layer of dry noodles

Choose wholegrain/seeded varieties of starchy foods

Fruit and vegetables - 5 or more portions/day.

One portion is:

- An apple, pear, orange, peach or small banana
- A slice of melon or mango/two pineapple rings/10 grapes
- 2 - 3 small fruits – plums, kiwi, satsumas, apricots
- A small glass of fruit juice or fruit smoothie (once a day)
- One tbsp dried fruit e.g. sultanas, raisins.
- A cereal bowl of salad/3 heaped tbsp vegetables

Meat, fish & alternatives – 2 to 3 portions/day.

One portion is:

- 60-90 g (2-3oz) cooked meat, poultry or vegetarian alternative (hand palm size)
- 120-140 g (4-5oz) cooked fish
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp nuts/3 tbsp cooked beans, lentils

Milk and dairy foods – 2 to 3 portions/day.

One portion is:

- 200mls (one third pint) milk/small pot of yoghurt
- 2 tbsp cottage cheese/40-45g cheese (match box size)



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## So what can I put on my plate?

Changing your diet is all about making small, healthy changes gradually over time. Use the following meal ideas to help plan your meals:

### Breakfast:

- Bowl of cereal e.g. porridge, no added sugar muesli, Branflakes, or 2 Weetabix. Add a chopped banana and milk.
- Small glass of fruit juice and two slices wholegrain or seeded bread with a little spread and thinly scraped marmalade or jam if desired.
- Poached, boiled or scrambled egg with 1-2 slices bread.
- Baked beans on one slice toast.

### Light meal:

- Sandwich with lean meat, fish, egg, chicken, turkey, cheese. Add lettuce, tomato, cucumber.
- Pitta bread/tortilla wrap filled with salad and filling of your choice.
- Small jacket potato filled with baked beans, tuna, low fat cheese.
- Chunky vegetable or lentil soup with a bread roll

Finish with fruit or diet yoghurt

### Main meal:

- Casserole or stew made with lean meat, chicken, fish with added vegetables
  - Spaghetti Bolognese made with minced beef, Quorn/soya (add carrot, mushrooms, green/red pepper to the sauce). Serve with a side salad.
  - Tuna pasta bake served with a green vegetable such as broccoli or side salad.
  - Stir-fry vegetables with chicken, pork or fish. Flavour with a dash of Soy sauce, chilli sauce or own herbs and spices. Serve with noodles or rice
- Finish with fresh fruit or a low sugar pudding e.g. milk pudding or diet yoghurt

### Snacks:

- Fruit
- 1-2 plain biscuits/crispbreads
- Slice currant bread/malt loaf/small teacake or scone
- Slice of toast or a small bowl cereal

Remember snacks can cause people to gain weight. If you are on certain tablets or insulin injections snacks will be needed. Check with your dietitian or diabetes nurse if this applies to you.

### My action plan:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.