

What is diabetes

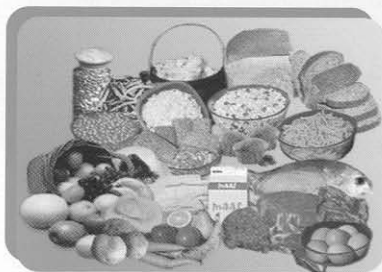
Diabetes is a condition which develops when the amount of glucose ("sugar") in the blood is not properly controlled.

There are different types of diabetes, which need different treatments. The type and amount of foods you eat and drink is the most important part of controlling diabetes.

What is "blood glucose"?

"**Blood glucose**" is also called "**blood sugar**". It comes from the food we eat and is used for energy. Normally, the amount of glucose in the blood is controlled by a hormone, called insulin. When someone develops diabetes this control does not work as well as it should due to either the absence of insulin in the blood or decreased amounts of it.

Enjoy a variety of foods



The eating plan for people with diabetes is a healthy way of eating which the whole family can enjoy. It is very important to have regular meals throughout the day. If you eat a number of different types of food you will be better able to keep your blood glucose within normal levels. There are no bad foods, however there are unhealthy eating habits such as eating foods that are high in fat or skipping meals.

To keep your diabetes controlled you need to:

- Follow a healthy eating plan
- Stay at or reach a healthy weight, which will be determined by your diabetes educator.

If you are at risk of or have Diabetes you should use the Healthy Eating Booklet as a basic eating plan, and adapt it to meet your needs by following are these extra tips for diabetics.

Make starchy foods the basis of your meals

Starchy foods are good sources of carbohydrate. Carbohydrate is a nutrient that provides the body with energy in the form of glucose. A person with diabetes therefore needs to be aware of foods that are rich in carbohydrate, as these foods will affect their blood glucose levels.

There are two types of carbohydrate:

Starchy foods (starches)

Sweet foods (sugar)

Starchy foods

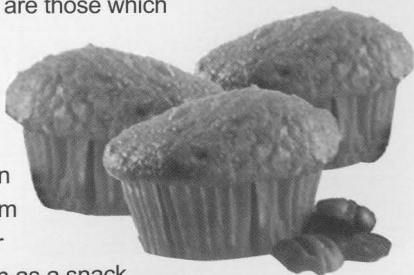
- The best starchy foods to choose are those high in fibre as they are digested slowly making it easier for your body to control your blood glucose.
- Starches by themselves, especially those rich in fibre, do not make you gain weight or worsen your diabetes especially those rich in fibre.
- However, be careful of having large amounts of starches in one meal (for example potato curry and rice). Your diabetes educator will advise you how best to do this.



Sweet foods

Sweet foods **can** cause blood glucose to rise very quickly. The best food choices of sweetened foods are those which have lots of fibre such as bran muffins.

It is better to avoid them, but if you are going to eat sweet foods, try to eat them less often and in smaller amounts. Also try to have them with a high fibre meal rather than alone for example plain cake after a meal rather than as a snack between meals.



Use fat & salt sparingly



- Too many high fat foods can result in weight gain and make your diabetes more difficult to control. They can also increase your risk of heart disease.
- Too much salt in the diet may result in an increased risk of high blood pressure.

Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit every day



3 pieces of fresh fruit (each the size of a tennis ball) may be eaten as part of main meals and or snacks. Spread fruit intake throughout the day in different meals or snacks.

Eat beans, peas, lentils and soya regularly



These are high in fibre which can help to control your blood glucose.

Lean meat, chicken, fish, low fat dairy products milk, maas and eggs may be eaten every day

Lean meat, skinless chicken, fresh or tinned fish, eggs or low fat milk or maas may be eaten every day.



A guide to healthy snacks

- It may be important for some people to have a snack at mid-morning and at bedtime.
- If you are hungry between meals eat a snack high in fibre. The following are some examples

Best snack choices

- A fresh fruit
- A small bowl of wholegrain cereal with low fat milk (for example untoasted museli, hi-fibre bran cereal)
- A slice of brown or wholegrain bread.
- Three (3) high fibre biscuits
- A low fat bran muffin
- A small tub of low fat yoghurt (125ml)



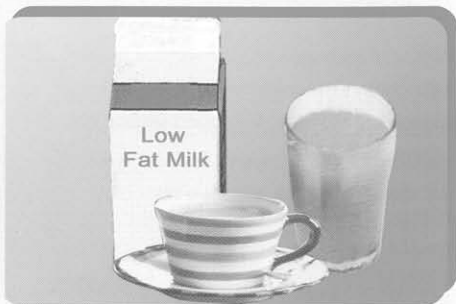
Poorer choices (High in Fat and Sugar)

- Meat pies, sausage rolls, fried samoosas
- Crisps and chips
- Cream or chocolate biscuits, chocolate bars and ice-cream
- Sponge cake, sweet pastries, cream cakes and sweetmeats

What can I drink?

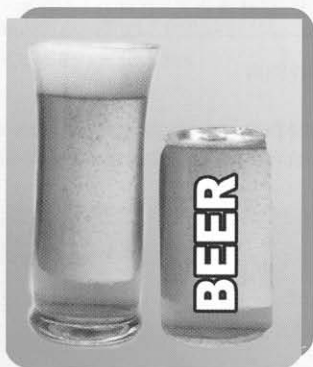
Hot and cold drinks

- “Diet” or “sugar- free” drinks are good choices for the whole family and may be drunk in moderation (up to 500ml per day).
- Fresh fruit juice and sweetened juice are best when diluted with water, (mix $\frac{1}{2}$ juice and $\frac{1}{2}$ water). These juices are otherwise in a very concentrated form of sugar and should be drunk in moderation.
- Sugar- free tea, cocoa and coffee may be whitened with fresh low fat milk or low fat milk powder as these are a better choice than coffee whiteners (creamers).



A l c o h o l

- Avoid alcohol at all costs. If you cannot, drink in moderation.
- All alcohol is high in energy and some drinks are high in sugar for example sweet sherry. Use sugar free or diet mixers with spirits for example diet lemonade & whiskey.
- Avoid sweet wine, sweet sherry, liquers and homemade beer.



Never drink on an empty stomach. Alcohol lowers blood glucose, which can become dangerously low. If you have alcohol, have it with a meal and your usual snack afterwards. If your blood sugar is too high or low, avoid alcohol (4-14mmol/L)

Try not to drink more than the following amounts per day:

- 2 small cans or 1 pint ordinary beer, lager or cider or
- 2 glasses of dry wine or
- 2 glasses dry sherry or
- 2 spirit measures

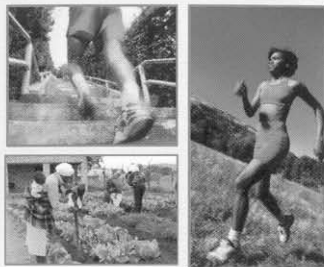
If you have been advised not to drink by your doctor or health educator then alcohol should be avoided.

Tips for healthy shopping

Check labels on foods and choose those which say “reduced sugar” or “no added sugar”. The words glucose, fructose, sucrose and dextrose all mean sugar. Choose foods where sugar is not listed in the first 3 ingredients.

Exercise

- It is important to do some form of exercise 3-4 times per week for 10-20 minutes.
- However before commencing on any exercise programme consult with your doctor first.



Suggested eating plan

This healthy eating plan should fit in with healthy eating for the whole family.

Breakfast

High fibre breakfast cereal or porridge or brown bread or toast

amount: _____

Margarine or low fat spread

Amount: _____

Lunch

Phutu or samp or roti or potatoes or pasta or rice or wholegrain bread or mealie meal

Amount: _____

Lean meat or chicken or fish or egg or cheese or beans, pulses, maas or milk

Amount: _____

Vegetables or salad

Amount: _____

Fruit

Amount: _____

Evening meal

Phutu or samp or roti or potatoes or pasta or rice or wholegrain bread or mealie meal

Amount: _____

Lean meat or chicken or fish or egg or cheese or beans/ pulses or maas/milk

Amount: _____

Vegetables or salad

Amount: _____

Piece of fruit or low fat yoghurt

Amount _____ or _____

You may use an artificial sweetener to sweeten porridge or drinks. (Try not use more than 6-8 tablets per day)

Milk _____ mls (_____ cups) milk perday

Medic alert bracelet

Ask your doctor or diabetes health educator about the use of a Medic Alert Bracelet.

Always carry some form of identification on you which states you are a diabetic including your current medical treatment plan (for example metformin tablet once a day). This could be important information in the event of an emergency.

