

What to Eat When You Have Diabetes

What you eat affects Diabetes, so it is important to follow these guidelines to control the sugar in your blood. It is essential you see a dietitian for more detailed dietary advice. Please ask your GP or consultant to refer you.



- It is important to have three meals a day, i.e. breakfast, lunch and evening meal. Include starchy foods, such as bread, potatoes, pasta, rice and cereals at each meal.
- Cut down on your intake of sugar and sugary foods.
- If thirsty, drink water, diet drinks and other unsugared drinks, e.g. tea, coffee.
- Do not have pure fruit juice or sugary drinks as thirst quenchers.
- Include vegetables or salad freely. Baked beans, kidney beans, lentils (pulses) are good to include regularly. Fruit can also be included but you should have no more than one portion at a time, e.g. one apple, pear, banana or small handful of grapes or dried fruit, etc.
- Try and cut down on fat – cut down on fried and fatty foods such as butter, margarine, cheese and fatty meats. These foods are high in calories and can make you gain weight. Choose reduced fat spreads and cheeses instead. Try skimmed or semi-skimmed milk.
- Cut down on your salt intake – reduce salt added in cooking by using more herbs and spices instead. Gradually cut down on the salt you add to your food at the table.
- Try to drink alcohol only in moderation – people with diabetes should try to limit their intake of alcohol. Keep within the safe limits for your health and for others, that is, no more than 14 units for women and 21 units for men per week. The maximum that men should drink each day is 4 units and the maximum per day for women is 3 units, while everyone should have 1–2 days' abstinence each week.
- Try to get to a healthy weight and stay there – it is much easier to control your diabetes if you are not overweight.



Remember – more specific advice will be given when you see a dietitian.

HIGH SUGAR FOODS	LOW SUGAR OR SUGAR-FREE FOODS TO EAT INSTEAD
Sugar, including sucrose, glucose, glucose syrup	Have tea and coffee without sugar or use an artificial sweetener like Candarel, Hermesetas or Sweetex
Squashes, pure fruit juice	Sugar-free or No Added Sugar squashes
Lemonade, Coca Cola, Lucozade	Diet, slimline, one-cal drinks - any flavour
Tinned fruit in syrup	Tinned fruit in natural juices
Sugared fromage frais and yoghurts	Diet yoghurts (make sure they are diet not just low fat), e.g. Diet Ski, Muller Light, Shape
Jam, marmalade, honey, chocolate spread, syrup, treacle	Small quantities of ordinary jam or marmalade, pure fruit spreads, yeast extract
Sweet puddings	Low sugar rice puddings (tinned or made with skimmed milk and a sweetener), sugar-free Instant Whip, fresh fruit, sugar-free Jelly, stewed fruit or custard made with sweetener
Sweet cream-filled and chocolate biscuits	Plain biscuits like Rich Tea, Digestive, Oatcakes, Arrowroot, Garibaldi. Limit biscuits if trying to lose weight.
Cakes, sweets and chocolates	Fresh fruit for snacks (spread through the day)
Drinking chocolate	Low calorie chocolate drinks, (e.g. Highlights, Options or Duos), cocoa with artificial sweetener
Honey- or sugar-coated breakfast cereals	Weetabix, Cornflakes, Shredded Wheat, Branflakes, Porridge, Fruit & Fibre