

Healthy lifestyle for young people with type 2 diabetes

Information and advice for young people

Paediatrics

What is type 2 diabetes?

If you have type 2 diabetes, it means that your blood sugar (glucose) is too high. Insulin helps the cells in our body use the glucose in our blood for energy. If you have type 2 diabetes either your body is not producing enough insulin or your body is not using the insulin it makes properly so the sugar builds up in the blood instead of going into the cells.

How does what we eat affect our blood sugar level?

High sugar food and drinks make the blood sugar level increase quickly. Starch foods generally give a more steady release of sugar. It is important to eat starchy foods at every meal as they give us the energy we need to go about our daily activities

Eating healthy foods is an important part of the treatment for diabetes. It will help to control your blood sugar (glucose) levels and reduce the risk of developing other illnesses e.g. heart disease.

To help control your diabetes it is important that you:

- Eat regular meals.
- Eat starchy carbohydrates with every meal (especially low GI carbohydrates).
- Reduce the amount of fat you eat
- Eat 1 or 2 portions of oily fish a week.
- Eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Reduce the amount of sugar and salt in your diet.
- Drink plenty of water
- Keep active
- Do not smoke.
- Take your medicines or injections as directed by your doctor.

The next few pages will tell you how you can have a healthy lifestyle and which foods you should be eating and avoiding.

Starchy carbohydrates

Eat starchy carbohydrates with each meal, especially those that are slowly absorbed. These are called Low GI (glycaemic index) foods. Examples of starchy carbohydrates to choose from are:

- Pasta: Macaroni, spaghetti.

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- Bread: Choose from the wholemeal variety or granary bread.
- Rice: Choose basmati rice or brown rice.
- Cereals: Choose oat-based cereals such as All-bran, muesli or porridge
- Yam: Boil or grill, do not fry
- Sweet potatoes: Boil or grill, do not fry
- Potatoes: Choose jacket potato or new potatoes
- Chapatti: Use wholemeal flour if possible. Do not add any fat. Keep the chapatti soft by covering with a cloth as you make it.

Do not choose these carbohydrate foods often:

- White bread
- Crisps
- Sweets and desserts

Fruit and vegetables

Eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Eat fruit as snacks and avoid adding fat or rich sauces to vegetables.

Examples of fruit and vegetables are:

- Apples, pears, oranges
- Dried beans or peas e.g. kidney, white, split and black-eyed beans
- Baked beans
- Salads
- Lentils, dhal, carrots, cauliflower, spinach

Meat, fish and alternatives

Eat only moderate amounts of these foods and choose low fat varieties such as:

- White meat without the skin e.g. chicken or turkey.
- Lean red meat. Be sure to cut the fat off.
- Oily fish such as salmon, mackerel, sardines and pilchards. Aim for 1-2 portions of these a week.
- White fish e.g. cod or haddock

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Fat

Fat is a source of fuel for the body but if we eat too much fat then we gain weight.

To reduce the amount of fat in your diet:

- Grill or bake instead of frying.
- Choose low fat alternatives.
- Cut off fat from meat.
- Use the smallest possible amount of fat in cooking.

Have less of these:

- Chips, pastries, crisps, biscuits, cakes, ice cream.
- Full fat milk and cheese, butter, mayonnaise.
- Lard, ghee, palm oil.

Choose instead:

- Olive oil, rapeseed oil, nuts.
- Low fat cheese, low fat yoghurt and low fat milk.

Sugary foods

Examples of foods and drinks containing sugar:

- Cakes and puddings
- Biscuits, pastries
- Sweets
- Ice cream
- Jam

Limit your intake of sugary foods. To do this:

- Choose diet drinks or 'no added sugar' squashes.
- Eat fruits instead of sweets and desserts.
- Drink water instead of fizzy drinks and fruit juices.
- Do not add sugar to cereals; use sweetener instead

Milk and dairy foods

These foods contain protein and calcium. They are good for bones and teeth. Be sure to choose low fat alternatives such as:

- Semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
- Low fat yoghurt or fromage frais
- Low fat/low sugar custard
- Low fat cheese e.g. Dairylea light, Laughing Cow light, half fat cheese

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Sample meal plan

BREAKFAST

Cereal with skimmed milk e.g. porridge
and/or
wholemeal toast
and
tea with skimmed milk

LUNCH

Jacket potato and baked beans
or
Sandwiches with healthy fillings
with
Salad and fresh fruit

EVENING MEAL

Pasta or rice or potatoes
with
Fish or meat
and
Salad or vegetables
and
Fresh fruit

Exercise

Exercise helps keep your body strong and healthy. It helps your body use up glucose for energy and therefore lowers your blood glucose. It can also help you lose weight or maintain the right weight.

Ideas to keep active:

- Spend less time watching TV or playing computer games.
- Choose a target for yourself.
- If you are not used to exercising, start slowly by doing a few minutes a day. Then build it up to 30-60 minutes a day.
- Walk briskly to school. If you normally take the bus, get off one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way.
- Take the stairs instead of the lift.

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- Make sure you check with your doctor if you need to take any precautions before exercising.

Make sure you choose activities that you enjoy doing. Here are some examples of activities you can do:

- Walking
- Riding a bicycle
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Football
- Basketball
- Badminton or tennis
- Gymnastics
- Dance to an aerobics video or on your dance mat

Useful Contacts

Consultant Paediatrician's secretary

0121 507 3358

Monday-Friday, 9am - 5pm

Paediatric Diabetes Liaison Nurse

0121 507 3476

Mobile: 07979 756 463

Monday-Friday, 9am - 5pm

Paediatric Dietitian

0121 507 3521

Monday-Friday, 9am - 5pm

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Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- International Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Diabetes, 'Nutritional management in children and adolescents with diabetes', 2009
- G.Frost, A.Dornhurst and R.Moses, 'Nutritional Management of Diabetes Mellitus', 2003

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5303 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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