

## HEALTHY LIFESTYLE INFORMATION



# HEALTHY EATING

## REDUCING YOUR RISK OF TYPE 2 DIABETES

**Reducing your risk of Type 2 diabetes includes following a healthy balanced diet. You can still enjoy a wide variety of foods but the food choices you make and your eating habits are important. This sheet is a starting point to help provide you with information on eating well.**

### TEN STEPS TO EATING WELL

**01 Eat regular meals.** Avoid skipping meals and space your breakfast, lunch and evening meal out over the day. This will help control your appetite.

**02 Include starchy carbohydrates as part of your diet.** The amount of carbohydrate you eat is important especially if you are managing your weight. Try to include those that are more slowly absorbed (have a lower glycaemic index) Better choices include: pasta, basmati or easy cook rice, grainy breads such as granary, pumpernickel and rye, new potatoes, sweet potato and yam, porridge oats, All-Bran and natural muesli. The high fibre varieties of starchy foods will also help to maintain the health of your digestive system and prevent problems such as constipation.

**03 Cut down on the fat you eat,** particularly saturated fats, as a low fat diet benefits health. Choose unsaturated fats or oils, especially monounsaturated fat (eg olive oil and rapeseed oil) as these types of fats are better for your heart. As fat is the greatest source of calories, eating less will help you to lose weight if you need to. To cut down on the fat you eat here are some tips:

- Use less saturated fat by having less butter, margarine and cheese.
- Choose lean meat and fish as low fat alternatives to fatty meats.
- Choose lower fat dairy foods such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low-fat or diet yogurts, reduced fat cheese and lower fat spreads.
- Grill steam or oven bake instead of frying or cooking with oil or other fats.
- Watch out for creamy sauces and dressings and swap for tomato-based sauces instead.

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### HEALTHY EATING AND REDUCING YOUR RISK OF TYPE 2 DIABETES



**04 Eat more fruit and vegetables.** Aim for at least five portions a day to provide you with vitamins, minerals and fibre to help you to balance your overall diet. One portion is, for example, a banana or apple, a handful of grapes, a tablespoon of dried fruit, a small glass of fruit juice or fruit smoothie, three heaped tablespoons of vegetables or a cereal bowl of salad.

**05 Include more beans and lentils** such as kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas or red and green lentils. Try adding them to stews, casseroles and soups, or to a salad.

**06 Aim to eat two portions of fish, including one of oily fish, a week.** Examples of oily fish include mackerel, sardines, salmon and pilchards. Oily fish contains a type of polyunsaturated fat called omega 3, which helps protect against heart disease.

**07 Limit sugar and sugary foods.** This does not mean you need to eat a sugar-free diet. Sugar can be used in foods and in baking as part of a healthy diet. Using sugar-free, no added sugar or diet fizzy drinks/squashes, instead of sugary versions can be an easy way to reduce the sugar in your diet if you are trying to lose weight.

**08 Reduce salt in your diet to 6g or less a day –** more than this can raise your blood pressure, which can lead to diabetes, stroke or heart disease. Limit the amount of processed foods you eat (as these are usually high in salt) and try flavouring foods with herbs and spices instead of salt.

**09 Drink alcohol in moderation only –** that's a maximum of 2–3 units of alcohol per day for a woman and 3–4 units per day for a man. For example, a single pub measure (25ml) of spirit is about 1 unit or half pint of lager, ale, bitter or cider has 1–1 1/2 units. Over the years the alcohol content of most drinks has gone up. A drink can now contain more units than you think – a small glass of wine (175ml) could contain as much as 2 units. Remember alcohol is high in calories so think about cutting back further if you are trying to lose weight.

**10 Be aware of portion sizes.** Your portion sizes are important if you need to lose weight. Half-fill your plate with vegetables/salad and divide the other half between protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs or beans and starchy carbohydrate foods.

For support and information about diabetes please call Diabetes UK Careline: 0345 123 2399\* (charged at local rate). A translation service is available. Open Monday to Friday 9am to 7pm.

If you would like to feedback on this or any of our other healthcare information, please email: [infofeedback@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:infofeedback@diabetes.org.uk)

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