

**South Warwickshire**



NHS Foundation Trust

**Warwickshire Dietetic Service**

## **Eating Well with Diabetes**

It is intended for people who are newly diagnosed with diabetes and require initial dietary advice.

You have been diagnosed with diabetes. Diabetes is a condition which cannot be cured, but can be controlled by making some lifestyle changes. Some people may also require medication.

### What is diabetes?

Diabetes occurs when your body is unable to make enough insulin, or the insulin it does make is not working properly.

Insulin is a hormone that helps you use the sugar (glucose) in your blood by changing it into the energy that your body needs. Without enough insulin, the level of glucose in your blood rises and this can cause the symptoms of diabetes. Some people may not have any symptoms at diagnosis.

Symptoms may include:

- tiredness
- thirst
- passing a lot of urine
- weight loss.

### Dietary guidelines

To help control your diabetes, you need to follow these dietary guidelines.

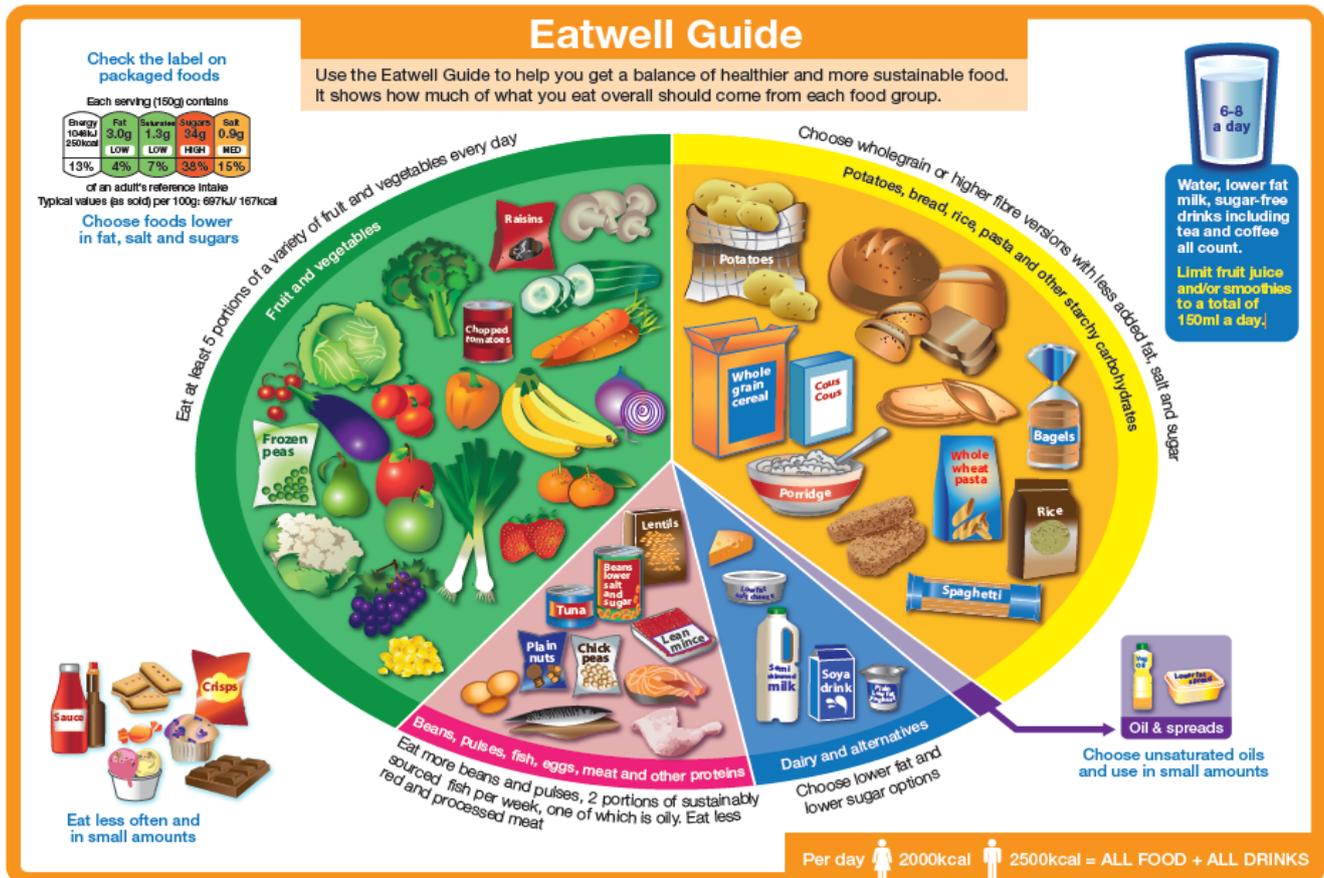
- Eat regular meals containing a source of starchy carbohydrate at each meal.
- Eat more high fibre or wholegrain foods.
- Eat plenty of vegetables and some fruit every day.
- Limit sugar and sugary foods.
- Cut down on fat, particularly saturated fat.
- Drink alcohol in moderation only.
- Avoid being overweight.
- Reduce your salt intake.

### Eat regular meals containing a source of starchy carbohydrate

Starchy carbohydrate foods include breakfast cereals, bread, rice, pasta, chapattis, noodles, flour and potatoes. As these foods contain starch they will raise your blood glucose levels. Include a small portion of these with each meal. If you are trying to lose weight, it may help to reduce your portion sizes of these foods. Try to eat more wholegrain or wholemeal varieties.

### Eat more high fibre and wholegrain foods

These foods are particularly good at helping control blood glucose levels as they are digested slowly by the body. They can also help control your blood fats and help keep you fuller for longer. Try to eat more of the following: oats, pasta, rice (particularly basmati or brown varieties), wholemeal, granary and rye breads, wholegrain cereals (e.g. Shredded Wheat, Oatibix, Porridge, Branflakes), wholegrain crackers, fruit, vegetables and salad, beans and pulses e.g. lentils, dhal, butter beans, kidney beans.



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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## Eat plenty of vegetables and some fruit every day

Try to have at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day. These provide you with vitamins, minerals and fibre to help you balance your overall diet. Fruit and fruit juices contain fruit sugar (fructose) so it is advisable not to have too many at one time but to space them out throughout the day. Limit fruit juice to one glass (150ml) daily. Fruit juice only counts as one of the portions of fruit and vegetables, no matter how many glasses you drink. Try filling up on vegetables and salad.

### What is a portion?

Vegetables e.g. cauliflower, cabbage, peas, carrots, swede, courgettes, broccoli, green beans	3 heaped tablespoons
Salad	1 dessert bowl
Whole fresh fruit	1 medium size fruit e.g. apple, pear, orange, banana or peach
Tinned fruit, fruit salad, stewed fruit	3 - 4 heaped tablespoons
Large fruits	1 slice melon or pineapple ½ grapefruit (not advisable if on statins)
Small fruit	2 plums, 2 kiwi 1 cupful grapes, cherries, strawberries
Dried fruit	1 tablespoon
Fruit juice/smoothie	1 small glass or carton (150ml)

### Limit Sugar and Sugary Foods

This does not mean you need to eat a sugar free diet but limit your intake. Here are some examples of lower sugar foods and drink alternatives.

#### Foods and Drinks to Avoid

Sugar, glucose, fructose

Sweets, chocolates, toffee, cough & throat sweets

Jam, marmalade, honey, treacle, syrup, lemon curd

Sugary drinks, squashes, cordials, fizzy drinks

Puddings containing sugar e.g. fruit corner yoghurts, jelly

Sugar coated cereals e.g. Sugar Puffs, Frosties, Honey Nut varieties  
Coco Pops, Alpen

Cakes, buns, tarts, fruit pies, gateaux, flans and sweet pastries

Cream or jam filled biscuits, chocolate biscuits

Tinned fruit in syrup

Sweetened condensed milk or evaporated milk

Drinking chocolate, malted milk drinks  
Ovaltine or Horlicks

#### What to Choose Instead

Artificial sweetener e.g. Saccharin, Sweetex, Canderel, Splenda, Truvia, Hermesetas and supermarket own brands

Sugar free mints, sugar free throat sweets  
sugar free chewing gum

Reduced sugar jam, marmalade, fruit spreads

Sugar free, low calorie, diet or zero fizzy drinks  
no added sugar squash

Sugar free whip, sugar free jelly, natural or diet yoghurt, sugar free custard

Oatibix, Weetabix, Branflakes, Shredded Wheat, Oatbran, cereals, porridge, no added sugar muesli

Crumpets, pikelets, plain teacakes, scones or malt loaf

Plain biscuits e.g. Rich Tea, digestives, morning coffee, arrowroot

Tinned fruit in natural juices

Skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed milk, natural yogurt

Tea, coffee, cocoa, Ovaltine Light, instant milk drinks with artificial sweeteners such as Highlights or Options

## **Cut down on the fat you eat, particularly saturated fats**

This will help keep your heart healthy and help you lose weight if you need to. Try to

- Choose lower fat dairy products eg. Skimmed or Semi skimmed milk, low sugar or diet yoghurts, reduced fat cheese and lower fat or olive oil based spreads.
- Grill, steam or over bake your foods. Avoid adding extra fats and oils when cooking.
- Choose leaner meats eg. Chicken, turkey, lean mince.
- Cut visible fat from meat.
- Watch out for creamy sauces and dressings and swap for tomato based sauces instead.
- Reduce your intake of snack foods such as crisps, nuts, cakes, puddings and chocolate.

## **Drink alcohol in moderation only**

Alcohol can affect your diabetes control. Limit your intake of alcohol to less than 14 units weekly, with several alcohol free days. One unit is approximately 125ml wine, 25ml spirits, half a pint of a normal 4.5% ABV lager, cider, ale or bitter. Do not drink on an empty stomach. Alcohol contains lots of calories so consider cutting back your intake more if you are trying to lose weight.

## **Avoid being overweight**

If you are overweight, losing weight will make it easier to control your diabetes, as well as reducing your risks of heart disease and generally improving your health. Following a healthy diet and doing regular exercise will help.

## **Reduce your salt intake**

This can help control your blood pressure which is especially important if you have diabetes. Try to avoid adding extra salt to your meals and reduce the amount of salt added in cooking.

### Your Questions Answered

#### All foods seem to contain sugar – how can I have a sugar free diet?

A diet for diabetes is not a **no** sugar diet, but a **low** sugar diet. It is impossible to avoid every gram of sugar in a product, but it is helpful to have knowledge of food labelling to help you choose a food that is low in sugar. Look for the “carbohydrates of which sugars” on food labels.

Food per 100g	High levels	Low levels
Sugars	22.5g	5g
Fat	17.5g	3g
Of which saturates	5g	1.5g
Fibre	3g	0.5g
Salt (Sodium)	1.5g (0.6g)	0.3g (0.1g)

#### Are special diabetic products necessary?

Diabetic foods and drinks are expensive and unnecessary. Instead, choose lower sugar products (please see the list of alternatives on page 4).

#### Can I still eat grapes?

Yes. All fruit contains natural sugar but is a very important part of a healthy balanced diet. Just be careful to have one portion at a time, and space out your intake.

#### What sort of snacks do I need to eat?

It isn't necessary to eat snacks between meals if you aren't taking medications for your diabetes. If you treat your diabetes with certain medications you may need to snack to reduce your risk of hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar levels). If you do require snacks try to choose healthy options.

#### What education is available?

Education courses are available locally and can help provide you with valuable information to help you learn about how you can look after your diabetes. These will also help you find out what support you can expect from your local health service. Please speak to your healthcare team for further information.

#### Further information

You may find it useful to join Diabetes UK. Their contact details are as follows:

Wells Lawrence House,

126 Back Church Lane, London E1 1FH

Tel: 0345 123 2399\*

Email: [info@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:info@diabetes.org.uk)

## Equality Statement

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to equality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff:

You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and our staff with dignity and respect

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

## PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services.

You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600 054 by email:

[Pals@swft.nhs.uk](mailto:Pals@swft.nhs.uk) or by calling in person to the PALS Office which is located in the Lakin Road Entrance to the hospital.

**If you have any queries about your diet, please contact us on 01926 600818, selecting option 3.**

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