

Diabetes: What's to Eat?

Carbohydrate

- Carbohydrate raises your blood glucose more than any other nutrient.
- Carbohydrates are starches, sugars and fiber.
- Eat equal amounts of carbohydrate at your meals. Space your meals evenly throughout the day.
- Use carbohydrate counting or another meal plan that controls carbohydrate to plan your meals. Count total carbohydrate, not just sugar in a food.
- Do not restrict your carbohydrate to less than 130 grams per day. If you are on insulin 3-4 times a day or use an insulin pump, you may be able to match your insulin dose to the amount of carbohydrate you eat.
- Fiber does not raise blood glucose. Eat higher fiber foods at every meal.
- Substitute equal amounts of carbohydrate from higher sugar foods for equal amounts of carbohydrate from starches, fruits and dairy foods.

Sweeteners

- The Food and Drug Administration says sugar substitutes are safe.
- You may use different ones depending on whether you are cooking a food or you want a certain taste or texture.
- Sugar alcohols are in some processed foods like sugar free candy. Eating too much may cause diarrhea or gas.
- A sugar free or reduced sugar food may not be lower in calories, carbohydrate or fat than the food it is replacing. Always read the label to be sure.

- If a food has more than 5 grams of sugar alcohol in a serving, subtract half the grams of sugar alcohol from the total carbohydrate.

Glycemic Index

- The glycemic index and glycemic load measure how high the blood glucose increases after a food containing carbohydrate is eaten.
- The glycemic load is more useful since it is based on the amount you will eat.
- It may help to predict your blood glucose after a meal.

Protein

- Limit protein intake to about 20% of your calories per day.
- Long term safety of high protein low carb diet unknown.
- If a person has kidney disease, protein may need to be limited.

Fat

- Limit saturated and trans fats. Eat more vegetables, fruits and whole grains and less meat, whole milk, cheese, skin on poultry, butter, stick margarine, pastries, fried foods, salty snacks and other high fat foods.
- Use vegetable oils and soft margarine in small amounts.
- Have fish at least twice a week.
- Limit cholesterol levels to less than 300 milligrams per day. If you have heart disease have less than 200 milligrams per day. Cholesterol is only in animal foods like meat, poultry, fish and egg yolks.

Weight Control

- If you are overweight, losing 10-14 pounds may help to control your blood glucose and lower your cholesterol.

- Long term weight loss requires a meal plan that controls calories and fat.
- Physical activity is vital for permanent weight control.
- Gastric surgery for weight loss can make symptoms of type 2 diabetes disappear or improve.

Supplements

- Special vitamin, mineral or antioxidant supplements for diabetes are not recommended.

Alcohol

- Limit alcohol to one drink a day or less for women and two drinks a day or less for men.
- One drink equal a 12 ounce light beer, 1 ½ ounces of hard liquor and 5 ounces of wine.
- Consume with food to prevent hypoglycemia.
- Do not drink if you are pregnant, have high triglycerides or diabetes nerve damage (neuropathy), have a history of alcohol abuse or pancreatitis.

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