

# Appendix 1: Initial Dietary Advice

## Healthy Eating and Diabetes

When you have diabetes your body is unable to control the amount of sugar in your bloodstream. You can help control your blood sugar by being careful about the food you eat. Diet is an important part of your treatment whether you are controlled by diet, tablets or insulin. There is no need to follow a 'special' diet; a sensible eating plan is best. This leaflet is a simple guide. Your Doctor or Nurse will refer you to a State Registered Dietitian to discuss your diet in more detail.

## Do Have Regular Meals

Try to have three meals per day. Missing meals, especially breakfast can lead to snacking later. If you feel you need something to eat between meals, choose low fat snacks such as fruit, vegetables or yoghurt. Have small amounts of meat, fish or pulses/lentils daily.

## Eat Starchy Foods at Each Meal

Include plenty of starchy foods e.g. bread, potatoes, pasta, rice, breakfast cereals etc. Try to choose those that are higher in fibre, if possible. Some fibre rich foods can slow down the rise in blood sugar, which could improve your diabetic control. Eat regular amounts of starchy foods at breakfast, lunch, tea and supper. They help to fill you up and should form the main part of all your meals. These foods include:

- Cereals e.g. Porridge, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, All Bran, Muesli, Oat-based Cereals, Cornflakes and Rice Krispies
- Bread and rolls – preferably wholegrain
- Potatoes – boiled or baked rather than roast or chips
- Pasta, rice, noodles and yam
- Chappati/naan bread

## Fruit and Vegetables

As well as being a good source of fibre, fruit and vegetables are low in fat and calories. They contain many vitamins and minerals vital for good health. Aim for at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day. These can be fresh, frozen, tinned or dried e.g. one apple, orange, banana, 2 plums, cup of grapes or berries, bowl of salad, 2 tablespoons raw, cooked, frozen or canned vegetables. Use tinned fruit in natural juice.

## Eat Less Sugary Foods & Drinks

Foods that contain large amounts of sugar can raise your blood sugar very quickly. These foods include sweet drinks, sweets, chocolate, cakes, biscuits and puddings. Try to use low sugar or sugar free alternatives instead. Remember to take tea, coffee and cereals without sugar. If you eat regular meals, you can include foods high in sugar in your diet occasionally but keep portions small. Try:

- Artificial sweeteners where possible, available in tablet or granulated form e.g. Hermasetas, Candarel, Natreena, Sweetex
- Diet or low calorie drinks and squashes
- Low sugar jams and marmalades, or small quantities of ordinary
- Plain, low sugar cereals e.g. porridge Weetabix, Cornflakes or Bran flakes
- Plain biscuits e.g. oatcakes, rice cakes, corn cakes, Garibaldi, crackers, Rich Tea, scones or pancakes
- Low sugar puddings and yoghurts - labelled no added sugar, diet or lite

## **Eat Less Fatty Foods and Snacks**

Eating less fat is important to staying healthy. Too much fat in your diet increases everyone's risk of heart disease. When you have diabetes the risk is increased. Fat contains a lot of calories; therefore too much will lead to weight gain. Carrying extra weight can make your diabetes harder to control and increases your risk of developing complications.

You can reduce your fat intake by:

- Baking, grilling microwaving or steaming instead of frying
- Choosing lean meats, fish or chicken (remove fat and skin)
- Using low fat dairy produce e.g. semi-skimmed milk, low fat spread and yoghurts
- Use a smaller amount of strong favoured cheese or use reduced fat cheeses e.g. reduced fat cheddar, Edam, Gouda or cottage
- Have boiled, baked or mashed potatoes instead of chips
- Avoid fatty foods such as crisps, pies, pastry, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, cream, cream sauces and salad dressings

## **Diabetic Products**

These foods (e.g. 'special' biscuits, cakes and sweets) are very expensive and can be high in fat and calories. They also contain sorbitol, which can have an unwanted laxative effect. Therefore these products are generally not recommended.

## **Weight Control**

Carrying too much weight can make your diabetes more difficult to control. Being overweight can also increase your risks of developing other health problems. Strict dieting is not recommended. Long-term results are best achieved by following a sensible, healthy eating plan as described in this leaflet. Your Doctor, Nurse or Dietitian will be able to discuss the most effective way for you to lose weight if necessary.

***Having read the information in this leaflet, write down any changes you could make.***

## **Alcohol**

Check with your doctor whether you can have alcohol. Drinking alcohol in moderation is usually safe. Alcohol taken in excess can upset your diabetic control and lead to weight gain. Recommended maximums

Men – no more than 3 units daily

Women – no more than 2 units daily

Aim to have 2 – 3 alcohol free days per week.

[1 unit = 1 pub measure of wine/sherry/spirit - vodka, whisky, etc or half pint of beer/lager/cider]

## **Salt**

Cutting down on salt can help lower blood pressure. People with diabetes can be at a greater risk of developing high blood pressure. Try not to add salt at the table and avoid too many salty foods e.g. crisps, bacon, tinned and packet soups, processed meats.

## **Making Changes**

Record your usual daily food intake here. Please include drinks.

Breakfast:

Snack:

Lunch:

Snack:

Evening Meal:

Supper:

Alcohol/Extras:

Having read the information in this leaflet, write down any changes you could make.

For further dietary advice, your Doctor or Nurse will refer to you a State Registered Dietitian to discuss your diet in more detail.

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