

## Healthy eating and diabetes

A healthy eating plan and physical activity are essential cornerstones for managing diabetes.

### Guidelines for healthy eating

#### **Aim for a healthy weight**

This is the most important thing you can do to manage your diabetes. If you are above your most healthy weight, even a small loss can improve blood glucose levels. Limiting foods high in fat, added sugar and reducing alcohol intake can assist in weight loss. Regular exercise along with reducing the size of your meals can also assist you in reaching your most healthy weight.

#### **Limit foods high in fat**

Foods high in fat can contribute to excess weight. Saturated fats (found mainly in animal products) and trans fats can increase your blood cholesterol level which is a risk factor for heart disease.

#### **Limit foods high in added sugar or quickly digested sugars**

Although eating sugar doesn't cause diabetes, foods which contain large amounts of added sugar or quickly digested sugar can upset diabetes control and cause weight gain, e.g. lollies, ordinary soft drinks and cordials, and refined breads and cereals.

#### **Pace your eating**

Have three small to moderate-sized meals, spread evenly over the day. Include slowly digested carbohydrate foods such as wholegrain breads & cereals, pasta, Doongara rice, fruit, starchy vegetables (sweet potato, corn), dried beans and lentils, low fat milk and yoghurt at each meal. Some of these foods are digested more slowly than others, and therefore help to control blood glucose levels (see 'Good food choices'). Some people will also need to include between-meal snacks, especially if there is a long time between meals. Check with your dietitian.

#### **Exercise regularly**

Exercise helps control blood glucose levels and your weight. It is a key to good health. Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity each day or at least 5 days a week. Consult your GP if you have concerns about re-starting exercise after a long period without exercising.

#### **Consult a dietitian**

A dietitian will be able to give you individual advice and education. Learning more about healthy eating will enable you to understand more about the relationship between diabetes and food and give you more confidence. It will also enable you and your family to enjoy a greater variety of good foods.



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GOOD FOOD CHOICES	
<b>Breads and cereals</b>	<b>1 serve =</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 3-5 serves daily</li> <li>&gt; preferably choose wholegrain varieties</li> </ul>	1 slice bread, ½ roll, ½ English muffin, 1 round crumpet, 2-3 large crispbreads breakfast cereals – eg ¼ cup raw oats, ¾ cup cooked porridge, 1½ Weetbix, 12 plain Mini-Wheats, ¾ cup Guardian, ½ cup All-bran, ½ cup oat bran ½ cup cooked noodles, spaghetti or macaroni ⅓ cup cooked barley or ⅓ cup cooked rice (choose Doongara or Basmati rice), ⅓ cup cooked bulgur (cracked wheat)
<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>1 serve =</b>
Aim for 5 serves of vegetables a day  <b>Starchy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; eat in moderation</li> </ul> <b>Non-starchy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; eat plenty</li> <li>&gt; fresh, frozen and canned varieties are suitable</li> <li>&gt; choose the low salt tinned varieties</li> </ul>	1 medium potato, 1 medium sweet potato, ½ cup sweet corn (or 1 medium cob), ½ cup cooked (dried) beans, peas or lentils  1 serve = 1 cup salad vegetables, ½ cup cooked vegetables asparagus      beetroot      broccoli cabbage          capsicum      carrot cauliflower      celery          cucumber eggplant          green beans    lettuce mushrooms      onions          peas pumpkin          spinach tomato turnip              zucchini
<b>Fruit</b>	<b>Any fruits are suitable      1 serve =</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; eat in moderation, 2-3 serves, space over the day</li> <li>&gt; fresh, unsweetened canned or dried (not glacé) varieties are OK</li> </ul>	1 apple, 6 apricots, 1 banana, 20 medium grapes, 1 orange, 1 peach, 1 pear, 4 slices pineapple, 1 tablespoon sultanas, 6 dried apricot halves, 1/2 cup tinned fruit drained, 150ml unsweetened fruit juice (limit to 1 glass / day)
<b>Milk products</b>	<b>1 serve =</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 3 - 4 serves daily</li> <li>&gt; preferably use low-fat or skim varieties</li> </ul>	250ml milk – fresh, dried, UHT, 150ml evaporated milk 200g yoghurt – plain or fruit (diet) 250ml buttermilk, soy milk (with added calcium) 40g hard cheese, 100g ricotta or cottage cheese
<b>Protein foods</b>	<b>1 serve =</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; 1 serve daily</li> <li>&gt; use non-fat cooking methods, e.g. baking on a rack, boiling, grilling, micro-waving, steaming</li> </ul>	120-150g lean meats such as beef, lamb, pork, rabbit and kangaroo 150g poultry without skin – chicken or turkey 150g fresh or canned fish, seafood ½ cup cooked (dried) peas, beans and lentils 2 small eggs
<b>Added fat</b>	<b>A small amount</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Use small amounts only, (e.g. 1 tablespoon per day of 'healthy fats')</li> <li>&gt; Limit frying</li> </ul>	Best choices are polyunsaturated or mono-unsaturated margarines and oils – eg sunflower, sunola, macadamia, rice bran, canola, olive. These are healthy fats for the heart. Avocados, nuts and seeds are high in 'healthy' fats, but also high in energy (calories or kilojoules). Use in small amounts if you are trying to achieve your most healthy weight. Avoid animal fats where possible– eg butter, lard, dripping, Suparfry, cream. Limit use of coconut milk/cream.

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## Sample Meal Plan

**Important:** Include some slowly digested carbohydrate food with each meal. These foods are underlined in the menu below. 1 cup = 250ml.

This meal plan describes average amounts of food for a healthy diet. People's food needs, metabolism, and weight vary greatly. It is useful to consult a dietitian to find what quantities are appropriate for you and to work out a personalised plan.

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### Breakfast

#### Example 1

1 serve breakfast cereal – with low fat milk (eg  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cooked porridge and 1 cup skim milk and 1 slice wholegrain toast – thinly spread with margarine, vegemite, 100% fruit spread, low fat cheese, or tomato).



#### Example 2

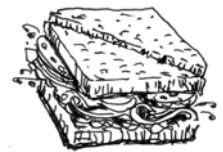
1 fresh peach or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup drained no-added sugar canned or stewed fruit or 200g low fat diet yoghurt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup baked beans and 1 slice wholegrain toast.

Tea, coffee, water.

### Light meal

#### Example 1

1 wholegrain sandwich or roll filled with 1 slice (30g) lean meat, skinless chicken, fish or fat-reduced cheese and salad and a 200g tub of diet fruit yoghurt.



#### Example 2

Salad with 1 slice (30g) lean meat, skinless chicken, fish, reduced-fat cheese or 1 egg plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  wholegrain roll or 1 slice wholegrain bread or 2 wholegrain crispbreads, 200g diet fruit yoghurt and 1 apple.



Tea, coffee, water

### Main meal

#### Example 1

1 bowl homemade vegetable soup made with fat free stock (if desired), 120g lean meat, skinless chicken or fish and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sweet potato or  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup Doongara rice and vegetables or salad, 20 medium grapes and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of low fat custard.

#### Example 2

1 cup cooked pasta with tomato-based vegetable sauce, with 120g lean beef mince and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup low fat custard with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup drained, tinned fruit in natural juice.



Tea, coffee, water.

The main meal can be either in the middle of the day or in the evening, whichever suits your personal preferences.

**Choose healthy snacks.** Fruit, wholegrain bread, fruit loaf, wholegrain crackers with low fat spread or cottage cheese or low fat yoghurt are good choices.

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CHECKLIST	
Healthier alternatives	Have these foods sometimes
<b>No or low added sugar</b>	<b>High in added sugar</b>
> Tablet, liquid or powdered artificial sweeteners.	> Sugar (brown, raw, white), syrups.
> Low joule jam/marmalade, Promite, Vegemite, meat/fish paste, 100% fruit spread.	> Ordinary jam, marmalade, syrups, Nutella, peanut butter.
> Low joule cordial/diet soft drinks > Plain mineral/soda water > Pure fruit juice – limit 150ml per day > Low fat milk, artificially sweetened flavoured milk	> Ordinary cordial, ordinary soft drinks > Flavoured mineral water, sports drinks e.g. Gatorade > Tonic water, fruit juice drinks > Ordinary flavoured milk.
> Light beer, dry wines or spirits – limit alcoholic drinks to no more than 2 standard drinks on any day	> Alcoholic drinks high in added sugar or calories – e.g. sweet wine/sherry, port, liqueurs, ordinary beer.
> Sugar free lollies sweetened with Splenda or other sweetener (limit to 2-3 lollies per day) – e.g. Double D sugar free.	> Confectionary – e.g. lollies, cough lollies, chocolate (ordinary/diabetic/carob), muesli/health bars e.g. sesame bars.
> Wholegrain crispbreads / crackers, wholemeal scones, fruit loaf.	> Sweet biscuits – e.g. cream, chocolate, shortbread cakes, donuts, iced buns, sweet pastries.
> Low joule jelly, fresh or tinned stewed fruit in natural juice (drained), custard or junket made with sweetener and low fat milk > ‘No-added sugar’ low fat instant desserts, Dairy Bell Lite ice-cream or light ice-cream (1 scoop) > Low joule ice cream topping.	> Sweet desserts – e.g. ordinary jelly, fruit in sugar, syrup, fruit pies, cheesecake, puddings  > Ordinary fruit yoghurt or ice cream  > Ordinary ice-cream toppings.
> Low sugar, low fat, high fibre cereals – e.g. porridge, Vitabrits, Weetbix, Allbran, Weeties, Guardian, Mini-wheats.	> Low fibre, high sugar cereals – e.g. toasted muesli, Nutrigrain, Coco Pops, HoneySmacks, Sugar Frosties
<b>No or low fat</b>	<b>High in fat, especially “bad” fat (saturated or trans)</b>
> Low fat mayonnaise, low joule dressings, vinegar, lemon juice, plain light yoghurt, fish / soy sauces, homemade stock	> Ordinary mayonnaise, oily dressings, cream sauces, fatty gravies, sour cream
> Reduced fat cheese, ricotta / cottage cheese	> Full fat cheese
> Lean cuts of meat – e.g. ham, beef, chicken or turkey breast, trim off fat, remove chicken skin.	> Fat on meat, duck and chicken skin. > Fatty meats – e.g. sausages, bacon, salami, fritz.
> Foods cooked without fat, or with a minimal amount of poly/mono-unsaturated vegetable oil e.g. grilled fish, rotisserie chicken (no skin).	> Deep-fried/battered foods; fried dim sims, spring rolls, pies/pasties.
> Fruit or vegetables, plain popcorn, low salt pretzels, plain rice crackers.	> Crisps, hot chips, prawn crackers.
> Limit to 1 tablespoon margarine/oil per day, preferably poly or mono-unsaturated. Choose margarines with less than 1g trans fat per 100g. > Limit nuts, seeds and peanut paste (choose unsalted nuts).	> Butter, palm oil, cream, dripping, lard, ghee, coconut cream / milk.

## For more information:

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Disclaimer: This resource is not suitable for, nor is it intended to replace the service of a qualified health practitioner.  
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