

Diabetes and Diet

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is where blood glucose levels are often higher than they should be. Uncontrolled blood glucose levels can cause both uncomfortable symptoms and long term risk of serious health conditions. It is important to make sure blood glucose levels are well controlled.

What causes blood glucose levels to rise?

Carbohydrates are needed for energy but they can cause blood glucose levels to rise. There are 2 types of carbohydrates:

Sugars



Glucose molecules



- Digest very quickly
- Make blood glucose levels rise rapidly

- Digest a bit more slowly
- Aim to eat with lots of fibre to slow digestion, such as wholegrains, vegetables and salads
- Larger portions make glucose levels rise for longer

- Blood glucose levels normally rise and fall through the day.
- Aim to keep blood glucose levels from rising and falling too much.

- Aim to limit sugars and keep carbohydrate portions consistent
- Slowing down digestion will help to keep glucose levels steady.

Which foods and drinks will make glucose levels rise?

Food/drink

Potatoes, cereals, rice and pasta and anything made with flour (bread, Yorkshire puddings, pastry, dumplings) will make blood glucose levels rise

Aim for a variety of vegetables, fruit and salads daily, as they contain beneficial vitamins, minerals and fibre. Fruit and fruit juices contain natural sugars.

Beans, lentils and other pulses are a great source of protein and fibre. They also contain carbohydrates.

Milk and yoghurts contain lactose, a type of sugar. Good source of calcium, protein and vitamins A and D to keep muscles and bones strong.

Fats and oils will not make glucose levels rise directly

Cakes, biscuits, crisps, sweets, puddings, chocolate, sweet drinks and table sauces are made with sugar. Will make glucose levels rise rapidly.

What to choose

Eat with lots of vegetables or salad. Seeded, granary or 50:50 breads, high fibre cereals, potatoes with skin, basmati rice or pasta.

Limit fruit juices, unless glucose levels are low. Encourage whole fruit, one portion at a time (1 handful or 80g).

Choose leaner protein sources. If having beans/lentils, reduce rice, bread or potato portions

If resident is overweight/healthy weight, choose low fat products. If resident is underweight, choose higher fat products. For flavoured yoghurts, choose light or no added sugar

Limit fat intake in diet, unless resident is underweight. Weight gain can prevent steady blood glucose control.

Small portions, less frequently. Space out intake. Choose diet or no added sugar drinks. Only use sugary drinks to treat low glucose levels.

Base meals around starchy carbohydrates



Aim for 5-a-day



Aim for 2-3 portions a day



Aim for 3 portions a day



Aim for small amounts daily



Limit sweet treats & drinks



Carbohydrate Portions

Snacks – aim for less than 15g carbohydrates



1 medium slice of bread or toast



1 pot light, no added sugar or plain yoghurt



1 portion or handful fruit 80g



2 Ryvita or 3 plain crackers



½ a scone or ½ teacake, 1 small slice of plain cake



2 plain biscuits (rich tea or digestives)



200mls glass of milk

Carbohydrates at meal times

- Keep carbohydrate portions at each meal time **consistent** to help blood glucose levels remain steady.
- Include **lots of fibre** with meals to slow down digestion. This will help to reduce higher blood glucose levels after meals.

Use the table below for approximate portion sizes for different carbohydrate-containing foods. Identify appropriate carbohydrate portions. Foods can be mixed and matched for greater variety.

Food	Carbohydrate Portions					
	20g		40g		60g	
Potatoes mashed*	 x1½	 x3	 x4½			
boiled	 x2	 x4	 x6			
chips	 75g	 150g	 225g			
baked	 1x small	 1x med	 1x large			
Basmati rice*	 x1	 x2	 x3			
Pasta*	 x2	 x4	 x6			
Bread	 x1	 x2	 x3			
Beans*	 x2	 x4	 x6			
Yorkshire Pudding	Small x2, Med x1	Small x4, Med x2	Small x6, Med x3			
Dumplings	 x1	 x2	 x3			

* Heaped tablespoon

March 2022