



A guide to...

Diet Advice for Type 2 Diabetes

Patient Information

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An introduction to Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 Diabetes is when your cells are resistant to insulin and the body is unable to fully use the amount of glucose (sugar) that is in your blood from the food that you eat. This results in higher glucose levels in your blood and your body releasing more insulin than it should.

The management of type 2 diabetes is largely dependent on diet and lifestyle factors in combination with your medication. These lifestyle changes are to improve your overall health by aiding weight loss if you carry excess weight, improving your body's sensitivity to insulin and ensuring your heart stays healthy.

Weight loss allows your body to become more sensitive to insulin and this will help your blood sugar to decrease to within normal range. Medication and lifestyle changes are often used together to improve your diabetes, both being very important.

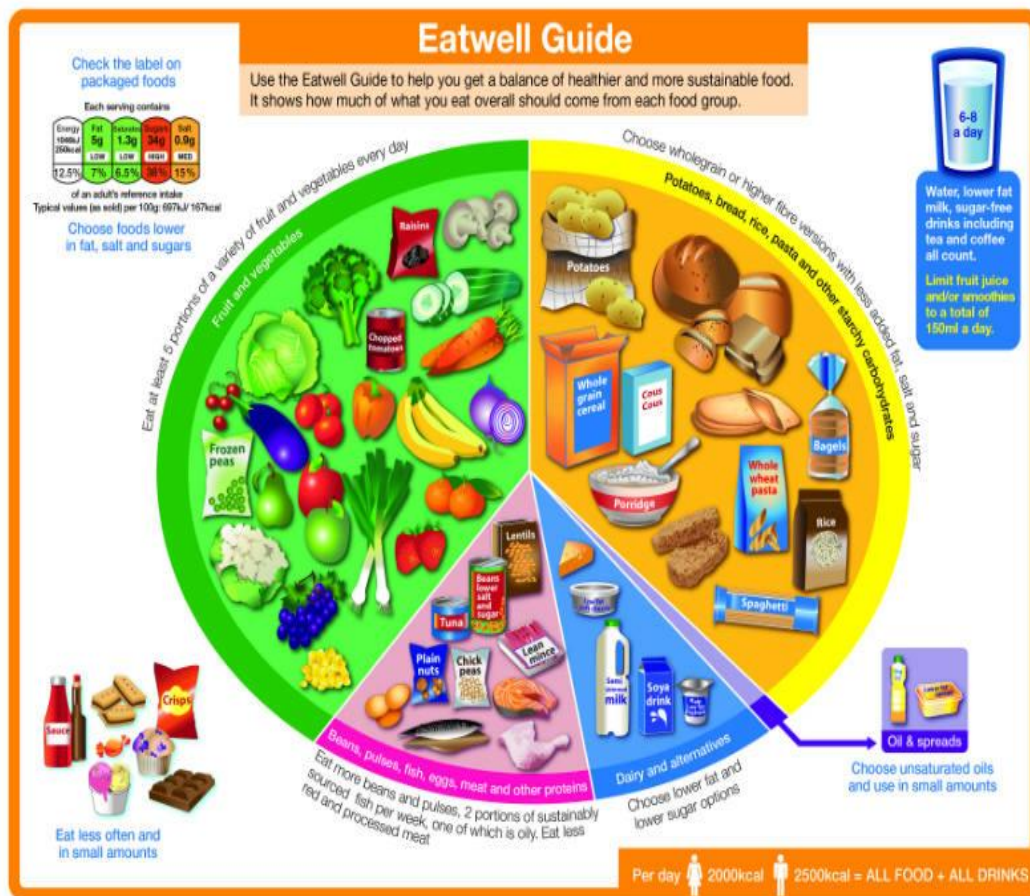
Exercise and a healthy diet aid weight loss and are a great way to improve your blood glucose levels.



A balanced healthy diet

There are no foods you can't eat when you have type 2 diabetes although there are some foods we may want to limit.

A balanced diet involves all food groups including vegetables, fruits, proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. We can use the Eatwell Guide as an example of a what a healthy plate will include.



As seen in the guide, we should be aiming to fill 1/3 of our plate with vegetables and fruits and at least five portions of vegetables and fruits daily. Vegetables and fruits are important for their fibre, nutrients and they are low in energy.

Fibre is a great way to keep you full and keep you regular. We can also get fibre from starchy foods, try choosing wholegrain / high-fibre options to improve your fibre intake as well as pulses such as beans, lentils, and nuts.

Try keeping your carbohydrate intake to one quarter of your plate to keep your blood sugar levels within range.

There are many forms of protein depending on your choices. Try to have a variety of legumes such as beans and lentils, lean meats, fish, and eggs. Proteins help to build and maintain muscle and are also important for satiety (keeping you full).

Calcium is an important part of keeping your bones and heart healthy, aim for three portions of dairy or fortified dairy alternatives daily.

Label reading

Added sugar, fat (especially saturated) and salt in excess can lead to increased weight and may worsen your blood glucose levels, blood fat levels and increase your blood pressure.

Foods like sweets, crisps, chocolates, juice/fizzy drinks and biscuits etc should not be eaten daily but may still be enjoyed in the diet on occasion. Rather choose fresh fruits, nuts and homemade popcorn as healthy snacks.

There are some alternatives such as sugar free squash which can be used and alternative homemade snacks. Speak with your dietitian to get some more ideas.

Reading food labels can help to make better choices:

Fibre: Look for fibre per serving or 100 g. A high fibre product contains at least 6g of fibre per 100g a 'source of fibre' if it contains at least 3g of fibre per 100g.

Sugar: Low sugar is considered to be less than 5g per 100g.

Salt (sodium): Low sodium is considered to be less than 140mg per serving.

Saturated fat: Low saturated fat is considered to be less than 1.5g per 100g.

Physical activity

Physical activity helps to keep the body and mind strong and healthy. It improves the functioning of your heart and can help with achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

The World Health Organisation recommends 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily.

There are many forms of exercise, these can be sports at school, kicking a ball in the backyard, dancing or walking with your family.

The whole family

The whole family should be involved with creating healthy habits and a sustainable healthy lifestyle. Children often learn from their parents or carers behaviour, so aim to be a good role-model for your children.

Involving children in shopping, food preparation and choices can help to improve their willingness to make changes. Aim to do family activities like walking the dog or going out for a family nature walk on weekends.

It is helpful to have a limit on screen time daily to prevent sedentary behaviour, this also encourages active play which is great for development.

With a healthy lifestyle and use of your medication, it is possible to manage your blood glucose levels and diabetes and prevent complications.

Should you need more help with dietary advice on the management of your type 2 diabetes, please get in touch with the Paediatric Dietitians or ask your diabetes team.