



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
EDUCATION HANDOUT – DIET AND DIABETES
MAKING SENSE OF DIET AN DIABETES

When you eat your blood sugar goes up. Your body will provide insulin to adjust your blood glucose levels. You have diabetes either because your body does not produce enough insulin or because your body cells cannot use the insulin that is produced.



Insulin is the “key” that helps your cells absorb and use the glucose (sugar) in your blood. If the insulin is not present to “open” your cells or cannot be used, the level of glucose in your blood stays elevated.

When you are first diagnosed with diabetes, you can do the most to protect yourself from the long-term effects of diabetes. If your blood glucose is high for long periods over a number of years it can result in major damage to your nervous system, eyes, kidneys, heart, and extremities. Control can include diet, exercise, and medication. All diabetics need to follow a meal plan. This does not mean you will have to eat differently than other people. It includes a variety of foods and is a more healthful way of eating. The key is the type and amount of food you eat determine how high and how fast your blood glucose levels go up. Carbohydrates affect your blood glucose the most.

According to the American Diabetes Association and American Dietetic Association, you should keep the following goals in mind when planning your meals:

- The best blood levels possible. With normal blood glucose, you will feel better.
- Blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides) in normal ranges to lower your risk of heart disease.
- The proper amount of calories is based on age, sex, and level of physical activity to help control your weight.
- All the nutrients you need.

What foods contain carbohydrates?

- Bread, crackers, and cereals
- Pasta, rice, and grains
- Vegetables
- Milk and yogurt
- Fruit and juice
- Table sugar, honey, syrup, and molasses
- Alcohol





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What's to eat?

There is no right way to eat. Based on your individual needs, your meal plan is developed with the assistance of a registered dietitian. Some general guidelines are:

Choose healthful foods from the different food groups:

- Bread, cereal, rice, or pasta 7 to 10 servings
- Vegetables – 3 to 5 servings
- Fruit – 2 to 4 servings
- Milk, yogurt, and cheese – 2 to 3 servings
- Meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts – 6 to 8 ounces daily
- Use fats, oils, and sweets sparingly
- Eat sugars and sweets in moderation
- Eat less total fat
- Eat less saturated fat
- Try to get on a regular meal schedule and stick with it
- Read nutritional fact panels on food labels



How does exercise affect your diet?



Regular exercise is an important part of your health care.

- It makes weight loss or maintenance easier
- It can help use up extra sugar in your blood
- A snack before exercising may be helpful so your blood sugar does not go too low
- Be physically active at least 30 minutes most days of the week

Please contact your physician if you have questions.

References

American Diabetes Association. (1998). *Diabetes Information for Prisoners*.

“Choose Your Food” Food List for Diabetics; 2019 revision.

The American Dietetic Association. (1990). *Diabetes and Food: A Guide for People with Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetes Mellitus*.

United States Department of Agriculture. (2011). Choose My Plate. Retrieved June 1, 2012, from <http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/website>.