

# TOP TIPS FOR DIABETES

Eating well for diabetes is the same as eating well for all aspects of health. It is simple, cheap and you don't have to give up carbs or sweet things entirely. Following these tips will help you manage or reverse your diabetes, whilst improving heart health, mood and energy levels. Making small changes to how you eat today can lead to big changes tomorrow, allowing you to enjoy a longer and happier 'healthspan'.

Your body is an amazing machine, beautifully complicated yet incredibly simple to operate - when you eat the right things. These tips will help you feed your 'machine' with the ingredients it needs to run smoothly. When this balance is achieved, your metabolism will take care of everything else, leaving you to enjoy the rewards of better health.

## FIBRE FIRST



Eating fibre-rich foods slows down the rate you digest carbohydrates and reduces blood sugar spikes. Fibre is found in fruit, vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds and most of us don't eat anywhere near as much as we should. Try and include fibre with every meal, especially with or before carbohydrate rich food to help balance blood glucose. For example, salad with pizza, vegetables with roast potatoes and beans with chips.



## PLANT RICH



You don't have to be vegetarian with diabetes, but eating a plant rich diet gives you tons more fibre and comes with a stack of vitamins, minerals and other key nutrients to help increase insulin sensitivity and reduce blood sugar levels. Try to eat a rainbow of different coloured fruits and vegetables to increase the amount and range of beneficial nutrients your body receives.

## WHOLE FOOD



Eat whole food that comes in its natural form. Whole fresh fruit is better than smoothies, smoothies are better than juices. The more foods are blended and processed the more nutrients, especially fibre, are taken out. The sugars are then absorbed more rapidly leading to raised blood glucose.

## WASH DON'T PEEL



Leaving the peel on fruit and veg wherever possible not only saves you time, but keeps all the goodness in. Most of the fibre and key nutrients are found in the skin (and seeds, stumps, stems and pods) which helps control blood sugar. Potatoes, root vegetables, apples and even kiwis are all better eaten unpeeled.

## WHOLE GRAINS



Almost all the fibre and nutrients are removed when grains are refined, leaving not much more than refined carbohydrate which rapidly raises blood glucose levels. In fact, the stuff that is removed gets sold back to us as vitamin pills! Try and substitute with whole grains wherever possible such as brown or wholemeal bread, brown rice and wholemeal pasta.

## HEALTHY FATS



Replace unhealthy saturated fats such as those found in red meat and butter with healthy unsaturated fats. Oily fish such as sardines, mackerel, salmon and tuna are great sources of healthy fats. Try and cook with olive oil (extra virgin if budget allows) or other seed oils and get more from dietary sources such as nuts, seeds, avocados, tahini, hummus and olives.

## AVOID UPFs

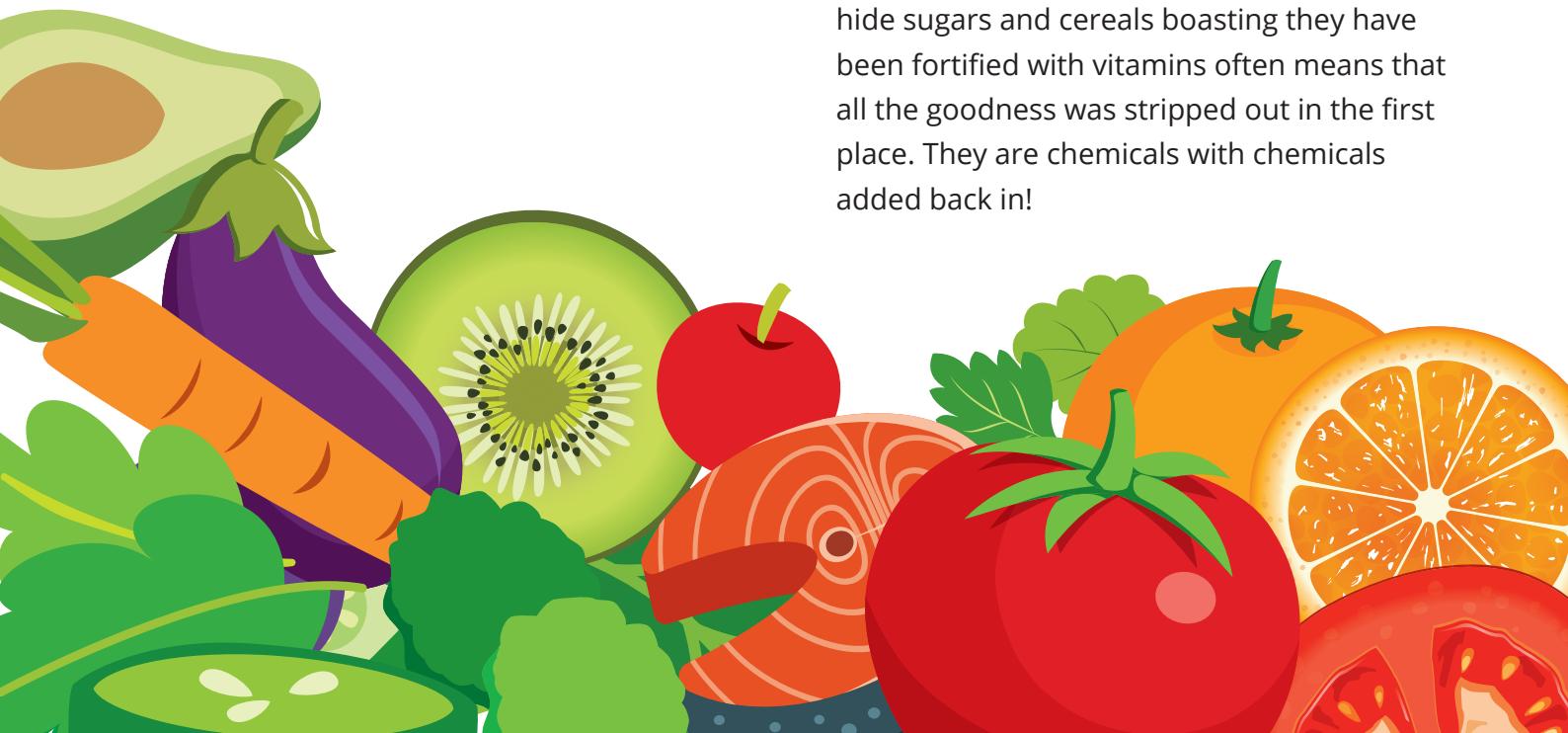


Ultra-processed foods - most things that come in wrappers like ready meals and snacks - are usually low in nutrients and fibre but high in sugars, unhealthy fats and additives. If the ingredients list things you would never find in your own kitchen and sound more like chemicals, they are best avoided. They won't give your body the nutrients it needs leading to hunger and possible weight gain.

## BEWARE OF CLAIMS



Always check the labels carefully on processed foods with health claims. Low-fat, low-carb or lo-calorie options have often filled up with something else and mostly lack fibre and key nutrients. High protein foods can hide sugars and cereals boasting they have been fortified with vitamins often means that all the goodness was stripped out in the first place. They are chemicals with chemicals added back in!



## DRINK AWARE



Try to have your main drink as water, tea or coffee. Diet drinks are full of artificial sweeteners that some evidence links with obesity and type 2 diabetes. Try to avoid all full sugar drinks such as coke, fruit juice and squash if possible. Limit your alcohol intake and try to avoid cider which can contain large amounts of sugar.

## INTERMITTENT FASTING

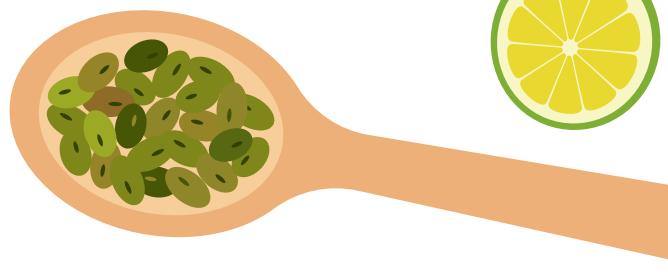


Allowing your body time without food is a great way to lower blood glucose and has many other health benefits. It does not have to be every day but try it occasionally and for as long as you can! It's easier than you think – after your evening meal fast overnight and for more than 12 hours, ideally aim for around 16 with nothing but water, black tea or coffee.

## PORTION SIZE



Controlling how much you eat will help lower blood sugar levels. Try smaller plates and bowls or batch cook so that you don't have leftovers and can measure portions before freezing / storing. It takes about 20 minutes for your body to signal to your brain that you are full so try to slow down eating by drinking more water, being mindful, chatting and eating whole foods that need more chewing.



## AVOID 'DOUBLE CARBING'



A good rule to prevent an overload of carbohydrate entering the body in one hit. Avoid meals which have 2 portions of refined carbohydrate - pie and mash, fish (battered) and chips, pizza and garlic bread, burger and chips. Better to replace one carb with a high fibre food such as veg, pulses or salad.

## CAREFUL SNACKING



Try having as few eating events per day as possible and minimise snacking. Nutritious meals with plenty of fibre and protein will leave you feeling fuller for longer and less likely to snack. If you do, don't be tempted by low calorie 'processed' snacks but rather try healthy options like fruit, nuts and seeds or veg sticks with hummus.

## AVOID TEMPTATION



The best way to avoid temptation is to remove it. Make a good food environment at home only keeping healthy foods and remove all high-sugar and processed snacks. Make the good stuff easier to grab with a fruit bowl and jars with toasted seeds or nuts clearly in sight.

## SHOP SMART



Shopping in supermarket leaves us constantly exposed to treats and temptations. Make a list and stick to it so that you don't grab unhealthy bargains or try online shopping. Better still, if you have access to one, use a greengrocer. If not, challenge yourself to shop just the fruit and veg sections in your local supermarket!



## FOOD TOGETHER

If you are eating whole foods there is no 'bad' food for diabetes, you've just got to be wise how you eat sweeter items. For example, have peanut butter, yoghurt or even cheese with a banana. Or dried fruit with nuts, chocolate with toasted seeds. Try to balance the sugar with some fat, fibre and protein to slow the glucose spike.

## TREAT YOURSELF

Enjoy some sweet treats with care and planning. Focus on smaller portions and try to eat just after a healthy, high-fibre meal. Pair with protein, fat and fibre as above and if you want a bit chocolate, go for a darker variety as it contains less sugar – ideally 70% cocoa or higher.

## HOME BAKING

Making your own cakes and deserts is a really good way to make diabetes friendly substitutions. Try recipes that use ground almonds instead of flour, olive or coconut oil instead of butter and fruit or even vegetables in place of some of the sugar. Xylitol is a good sugar replacement when baking, its more expensive but unlike most other artificial sweeteners, is a type of fibre and is good for you.

## LOVE GOOD FOOD

Try to live so that food in wrappers is no longer a treat, they are just poor-quality foods that your body has grown used to and addicted to. Why treat yourself to something that does harm? Learn to treat your body to good healthy food.

## MOVE MORE

The best way to take sugar out of your blood is to use it as energy to power your muscles. Try to move more, particularly after meals. There is evidence that walking or even just moving your calves after a meal can reduce the glucose spike in your blood.

## EXERCISE SNACKING

You don't have to run a marathon to lower blood glucose levels. Just doing small bursts frequently has been shown to help control diabetes. Squats whilst waiting for the kettle, walking fast up a hill, going up and down stairs a few extra times or just two intense minutes on a treadmill or exercise bike a couple of times a week make a big difference.

## SLEEP AND STRESS

Stress and lack of sleep both increase hormones that can affect insulin levels. Being organised, exercising, reducing alcohol, eating well and avoiding sugary foods all help reduce stress, improve sleep and help manage diabetes. Try mindfulness, meditation, yoga to reduce stress and only have caffeine in the morning if you have trouble getting to sleep.

