

What is healthy eating for people with diabetes?

The answer is ... the same as healthy eating for everyone! There is no need for people with diabetes to have a special "diabetic diet". Those days are long gone and now the family can share the same meals together.

What is healthy eating?

The best place to start on your quest for healthy eating is the "Australian Dietary Guidelines" published by the Australian Government, National Health and Medical Research Council.

Some additional considerations that help a person with diabetes (and are helpful for everyone) are to:

Eat regular meals – including regular carbohydrate foods and spread out the amount of carbohydrate evenly over the day rather than having a large amount at once. This is a key to helping keep blood glucose levels even.

Choose low glycemic index (GI) foods (slowly absorbed carbohydrate) that raise blood glucose levels more slowly. Aim for one low GI carbohydrate food at each meal. We'll talk about this in more detail in future editions.

Why does eating make a difference in diabetes?

Healthy eating can help manage:

- blood glucose levels,
- weight & body fat,
- risk of heart disease (by helping lower cholesterol levels and blood pressure).

Healthy eating also aims to provide the nutrients your body needs for good health. Of course food is not the only thing to consider – a person with diabetes may also need medications and certainly physical activity in accordance with ability.

What to put on your plate –practical tips

Here are some practical suggestions to get you started in making changes towards healthier eating.

Breakfast – choose wholegrain and wholemeal breads.

Choose high fibre and wholegrain breakfast cereals especially ones based on oats, barley and bran. Rolled oats made into porridge is a good example. Use low fat milk (1% fat). Add fresh fruit to your breakfast cereal.

Snacks – have fruit, low fat yoghurt and low fat milk drinks because these foods often don't get eaten in other meals.

Lunch – use canola or olive oil, margarine or avocado on sandwiches instead of butter. Include salads or vegetables – such as a salad sandwich or vegetable soup.




Always include a carbohydrate food with lunch (and at every meal) such as wholegrain bread, wholegrain crispbreads, pasta, basmati or doongara rice, noodles, potato, sweet potato, fruit or yoghurt.

Evening meal – choose lean meats/chicken/fish or alternatively legumes (lentil, dried or tinned beans), egg or nuts instead of meat. Include plenty of vegetables or salads.

Include a source of carbohydrate such as potato, sweet potato, rice, pasta or noodles.

Use herbs, spices, lemon juice, low fat & low salt sauces/pickles/relish for flavourings rather than high fat or high salt sauces or gravies.

I'd love to hear from you. Send in your requests for topics for future editions of this magazine to The Editor, DTour Magazine, GPO Box 827 Hobart 7001 or email editor@dtourmagazine.com.au 

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Dietary Guidelines for Australian Adults

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods:

- Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits,
- Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain,
- Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives,
- Include milks, yoghurts, cheeses and/or alternatives, Reduced-fat varieties should be chosen, where possible, and
- Drink plenty of water,

and take care to:

- Limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake,
- Choose foods low in salt,
- Limit your alcohol intake if you choose to drink,
- Consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars,
- Prevent weight gain: be physically active and eat according to your energy needs,
- Care for your food: prepare and store it safely,
- Encourage and support breastfeeding.