

This leaflet is provided by [Diabetes UK](#), the leading charity that cares for, connects with and campaigns on behalf of every person affected by, or at risk of diabetes.

Reducing your risk of [type 2 diabetes](#) includes following a healthy balanced diet. You can still enjoy a wide variety of foods but the food choices you make and your eating habits are important. This leaflet is a starting point to help provide you with information on eating well.

Ten Steps to Eating Well

1. Eat regular meals

Avoid skipping meals and space your breakfast, lunch and evening meal out over the day. This will help control your appetite.

2. Include starchy carbohydrates as part of your diet

The amount of carbohydrate you eat is important especially if you are managing your weight. Try to include those that are more slowly absorbed (have a lower glycaemic index). Better choices include: pasta, basmati or easy cook rice, grainy breads such as granary, pumpernickel and rye, new potatoes, sweet potato and yam, porridge oats, All-Bran® and natural muesli. The high-fibre varieties of starchy foods will also help to maintain the health of your digestive system and prevent problems such as constipation.

3. Cut down on the fat you eat, particularly saturated fats, as a low-fat diet benefits health

Choose unsaturated fats or oils, especially monounsaturated fat (e.g. olive oil and rapeseed oil) as these types of fats are better for your heart. As fat is the greatest source of calories, eating less will help you to lose weight if you need to. To cut down on the fat you eat here are some tips:

- Use less saturated fat by having less butter, margarine and cheese.
- Choose lean meat and fish as low-fat alternatives to fatty meats.
- Choose lower-fat dairy foods such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low-fat or diet yogurts, reduced-fat cheese and lower-fat spreads.
- Grill, steam or oven bake instead of frying or cooking with oil or other fats.
- Watch out for creamy sauces and dressings and swap for tomato-based sauces instead.
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4. Eat more fruit and vegetables

Aim for at least five portions a day to provide you with vitamins, minerals and fibre to help you to balance your overall diet. One portion is, for example, a banana or apple, a handful of grapes, a tablespoon of dried fruit, a small glass of fruit juice or fruit smoothie, three heaped tablespoons of vegetables or a cereal bowl of salad.

5. Include more beans and lentils

For example, kidney beans, butter beans, chickpeas or red and green lentils. Try adding them to stews, casseroles and soups, or to a salad.

6. Aim to eat two portions of fish, including one of oily fish, a week

Examples of oily fish include mackerel, sardines, salmon and pilchards. Oily fish contains a type of polyunsaturated fat called omega 3, which helps protect against heart disease.

7. Limit sugar and sugary foods

This does not mean you need to eat a sugar-free diet. Sugar can be used in foods and in baking as part of a healthy diet. Using sugar-free, no added sugar or diet fizzy drinks/squashes instead of sugary versions can be an easy way to reduce the sugar in your diet if you are trying to lose weight.

8. Reduce salt in your diet to 6 g or less a day

More than this can raise your blood pressure, which can lead to diabetes, stroke or heart disease. Limit the amount of processed foods you eat (as these are usually high in salt) and try flavouring foods with herbs and spices instead of salt.

9. Drink alcohol in moderation only

That's a maximum of 2-3 units of alcohol per day for a woman and 3-4 units per day for a man. For example, a single pub measure (25 ml) of a spirit is about 1 unit or half a pint of lager, ale, bitter or cider has 1-1½ units. Over the years the alcohol content of most drinks has gone up. A drink can now contain more units than you think. A small glass of wine (175 ml) could contain as much as 2 units. Remember alcohol is high in calories so think about cutting back further if you are trying to lose weight.

10. Be aware of portion sizes

Your portion sizes are important if you need to lose weight. Half fill your plate with vegetables/salad and divide the other half between protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs or beans and starchy carbohydrate foods.