

Dietary Control of Diabetes

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Dietary Control of Diabetes

Overview

The most common form of diabetes is type 2 diabetes. Millions of Americans currently have type 2 diabetes and many more are at risk of this disease. Type 2 diabetes is a disorder that affects the way your body metabolizes sugar.

Diabetes Diet: Overview

A diabetes [diet](#) is a healthy eating plan that helps a patient control his blood sugar. A dietician can help to guide these healthy choices. According to the Mayo clinic, a diabetes diet is also known as medical nutrition therapy, or MNT. This diet emphasizes fruit vegetables and whole grains. The MNT diet is low in [fat](#) and calories.

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Diet Benefits

Diabetes is identified as a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease, or CVD, stroke and kidney disease. The goal of treatment for patients with diabetes is to maintain blood glucose levels as close to normal as possible. Diets that are high in calories and fat create undesirable increases in blood glucose. Maintaining good glucose control helps to lower the incidence of CVD, retinopathy, neuropathy and kidney disease.

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Good Foods

The Mayo clinic recommends healthy carbohydrates, fiber-rich foods, fish and good fats. Healthy carbohydrates include fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains as well as low-fat dairy products. [Fiber](#) rich foods decrease the risk of heart disease as well as help control blood sugar. These foods include vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole-wheat flour, bran and legumes. Fish is a good alternative to high fat meats. However, fried fish should be avoided. Good fat foods are foods that are high in mono and polyunsaturated fats, such as nuts, olives and avocados. However, good fats need to be used in moderation.

Unhealthy Choices

Foods that should be avoided are ones that cause sharp increases in blood sugar and those that increase the risk of heart disease. These include foods that are high in carbohydrates, saturated and trans fats and foods high in cholesterol and sodium. Alcohol should also be avoided

Creating a Personalized Plan

A dietitian can help you to create a personalized plan for diabetes and there are a couple ways to create a plan that works for you. Counting carbohydrates involves measuring food portions and learning how to read labels. The exchange system groups foods into categories and allows you to understand how to exchange foods from different categories The glycemic index is another guide for food that lists what foods cause greater increases in blood sugar. The higher the glycemic index, the greater the increase in blood sugar.

Conclusion

Carbohydrate intake needs to be carefully monitored in diabetics as carbohydrates have the greatest influence of blood sugar levels. A healthy eating plan can help diabetics to not only control their blood sugar but decrease the risk of diabetes complications, including decreasing the risk for cardiovascular disease. Diabetics need to also exercise regularly and take their prescribed medicines. A dietitian can be invaluable in helping diabetics to develop personalized meal plans.

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References

- [American Diabetes Association: Diabetes Basics.](#)
- [The Mayo Clinic: Diabetes diet Create your healthy-eating plan.](#)
- [Health Central: Diabetes prevention center Major Food Components](#)

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[Healthy Food Choices for Diabetics](#)

[Healthy Food Choices for Type 1 Diabetes](#)

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About this Author

Ruwaida Vakil began freelancing as a medical writer in 1999. Her work has appeared in various online publications. Ruwaida earned her Master of Science in immunology at the University of Toronto and the Ontario Cancer Institute. Ruwaida currently runs her own freelance medical writing business called ProMed Write.

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