

# HEALTHY EATING IN T2D DIABETES



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# Type 2 Diabetes

- Between 80-90% of people with T2D are overweight and/or have excessive fat accumulation compromising liver and pancreatic function
- Weight loss of 5% or more is needed to improve glycaemic control significantly
- Weight loss improves insulin sensitivity, features of metabolic syndrome and reduces cardiovascular risk.
- Developing T2D in your 20's and 30's decreases life expectancy by 12 years!



# 'JUST TELL ME WHAT TO EAT'

Most important part to help patients with their healthy eating plan is to individualise it- the key is small realistic changes

Understanding 'treats are treats' not an everyday essential

- + No food off limits but trying to markedly reduce intake of ultra processed foods and encourage foods in their more natural form
- Fruits and Vegetables - Fresh, frozen, dried and canned – they all count. Go for a rainbow of colours to get as wide a range of vitamins and minerals as possible. Try to avoid fruit juices and smoothies as they don't have as much fibre.

Starchy Carbohydrates – ideally in more natural wholegrain form – bread, pasta, rice, cereal and potato – BUT demonstrate portion size and avoiding multiple stacking – such as cereal and toast for breakfast, or potatoes and Yorkshire pud

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# 'JUST TELL ME WHAT TO EAT'

Protein foods like beans, nuts, pulses, eggs, meat and fish

- + Protein recommendations are 0.8g per kg of body weight – for example a 60kg person should aim for around 48g of protein daily, and 80kg person aim for around 64g of protein +
- ○ Protein recommendations rise daily for those over 65- 1.2-1.5g per kg of body weight ○

Dairy foods and alternatives

Milk, cheese and yogurt have lots of calcium and protein in – fermented dairy also good for gut health

Fat

We need some fat in our diet but we need less saturated fat. Better options are monounsaturated fats such as olive oil and nut butters day to day

# 'JUST TELL ME WHAT TO EAT'

- + Aim to drink 6 to 8 cups or glasses of fluid a day. Water, lower-fat milk and sugar-free drinks, including tea and coffee, all count. +
- ○ Retuning and listening to our hunger signals - Am I full? Am I thirsty? ○
- ○ Excellent recourses at Diabetes UK – factual and up to date ○

# IS IT JUST DIABETES I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT?

+ The second major cause of cancer is being overweight or obese <sup>1</sup> alongside the increased risk of cardiovascular disease and poorer outcomes for people living with chronic kidney disease

• 64% of adults in UK in 2022/23 were living with being overweight and obesity <sup>2</sup>

○ This is unfortunately only increasing

26.8% children aged 2-15 years are living with being overweight or obese <sup>2</sup>

Healthy food and activity choices are the foundation of modifiable reduction in risk factors that we can make

<sup>1</sup> Cancerresearchuk.com 2025

<sup>2</sup> Gov.uk



# GLP1 AND GIP MEDICATIONS

Encourage using as a tool to help understand portion sizes and food choices whilst taking the medication-helping patients understand benefits of avoiding ultra processed food

Encourage patients to prioritise eating cheap, easily accessible high protein foods rather than wasting their limited appetite on ultra processed food – which is high in calories and low in nutrients

Encourage good hydration as if appetite reduced and/or feeling nauseated patients reduce their fluid intake as well as food intake

Resistance exercise important to reduce loss of muscle mass – 10% of weight loss is muscle mass <sup>1</sup>

Supervised structured exercise programmes should be recommended to help prevent muscle mass loss and increase exercise tolerance <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SURMOUNT-1 and STEP-1 studies 2022

<sup>2</sup> Gross and Brinkman, 2024

# SGLT2 MEDICATIONS – 'FLOZINS'

Hydration important due to action of medication – if unable to keep hydrated – due to illness/acute environmental factors – STOP medication until able to maintain normal hydration

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AVOID ketogenic diets – this is a low carbohydrate/high fat diet – can cause DKA whilst on SGLT2

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# ALCOHOL

- + Recommended safe alcohol intake is 14 units or less a week for both men and women
- If regularly drinking 14 units a week spread these over 3 or more days

Examples of units –

A bottle of 750ml ABV 13% wine – around 10 units

A pint of ABV 4% lager – 2.3 units

A 25ml measure of a spirit – 1 unit

# FOOD LABELS

## Total fat

High: more than 17.5g of fat per 100g  
Low: 3g of fat or less per 100g

## Saturated fat

High: more than 5g of saturated fat per 100g  
Low: 1.5g of saturated fat or less per 100g

## Sugars

High: more than 22.5g of total sugars per 100g  
Low: 5g of total sugars or less per 100g

## Salt

High: more than 1.5g of salt per 100g (or 0.6g sodium)  
Low: 0.3g of salt or less per 100g (or 0.1g sodium)

# INTERMITTENT FASTING (IF) AND TIME-RESTRICTED EATING (TRE)

- + Intermittent fasting (IF) and time-restricted eating (TRE) are popular dietary approaches that involve limiting food intake to specific time periods +
  - Intermittent fasting refers to an eating pattern that alternates between periods of eating and fasting. It does not prescribe specific foods but rather focuses on when to eat – such as the 5:2 diet – eat normally for 5 days and calorie restrict on 2 days. •
  - Time-restricted eating involves limiting food intake to a specific window each day, such as the 16:8 method, where you eat during an 8 hour period and fast for the remaining 16 hours.
- Potential benefits –
- Weight loss by reducing eating window fewer calories consumed
  - Improved metabolic health as may enhance insulin sensitivity and improve cholesterol profiles

• **BUT.....**

Some studies have indicated that although intermittent fasting may help reduce the risk of heart disease more recent findings suggest that very short eating windows (less than 8 hours) could be linked with increased cardiovascular risks especially in patients with established cardiovascular disease <sup>1</sup>

- + This highlights the importance of considering not just the duration of fasting but the overall eating pattern and food choices and its implication for health
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- + ○



# Summary

Remember there is a person behind these numbers

Small manageable changes with individualised care

Healthy lifestyle is for whole family not just individual sitting in front of you

Make every contact count

Use resources we have – DESMOND, Pathway to remission, Health Coaches, gym membership on prescription, Healthier You, Diabetes Uk and local free walking/activity groups

**THANK YOU AND  
KEEP DOING THE  
FANTASTIC JOBS  
YOU DO**

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