

## Dietetic Department

# Patient Information



The Information Standard



# Information

If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail [pals@dchft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@dchft.nhs.uk)

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## Hospital Menu Guidance for Patients with Diabetes

Menus used to be coded with a 'D' for 'Diabetic diet' but we now know that one diet doesn't suit everyone with diabetes. There is no such thing as a 'diabetic diet' so the 'D' code has been removed. If you don't know what to eat for the best, please read this leaflet and if you have any questions, ask to speak to a Dietitian.

### Diabetes and Diet

If you have diabetes, the amounts and types of food that you eat will affect your blood glucose levels. Your blood glucose levels will have an effect on your overall health as well as specific things like your body's ability to fight infection and heal wounds.

When you are in hospital, the food and drink you have may be different from what you have at home, in different sized portions or at different times. This will affect your blood glucose levels and your medication may need adjusting. Make sure that if your medication dose does change, that you are clear on what your doses need to be when you go home.

You may have been advised on what blood glucose levels to aim for. Being unwell can affect blood glucose levels so the levels we consider acceptable when you are in hospital are 4-12mmol/l.

Having diabetes doesn't stop healthy eating messages applying to you, the same as they do to everyone else.

### Getting the Balance Right – Healthy Eating

Eating healthily involves more than just getting blood glucose control. A healthy diet will be;

- low in saturated fat, for a healthy heart
- high in fibre, for a healthy bowel, lower glycaemic index and to help feel full after eating
- moderate on calories to avoid any unnecessary weight gain.
  - ➔ Carrying too much weight can prevent your insulin working properly (insulin made by your body or injected) as well as having other effects on your health

For more information on a healthy diet, ask to see a dietitian or go to [www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating) or for loads of really practical tips and ideas for when you go home, go to [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life).

## Getting the Balance Right – Carbohydrates (Carb)

Carbohydrate is an essential nutrient giving energy to your body. If you eat more carb than your insulin (insulin made by your body or injected) can cope with, then your blood glucose levels will go high. If you do not eat enough carb your blood glucose levels may go low. For this reason;

- it is essential to have some carb at each hospital meal (3 meals per day).  
Missing out on carb at a meal time can cause problems for your diabetes medication
- if there is a risk of hypoglycaemia (blood glucose levels below 4mmol/l) you may be advised to have carb snacks between your meals.
  - ➔ If there is no risk of hypoglycaemia, you may not need extra snacks.
- it is important to know what your blood glucose levels are. In hospital you will be having your levels checked regularly by finger-prick.
  - ➔ If your blood glucose levels are generally too high, you may need to eat less carb or take more diabetes medication.
  - ➔ If your blood glucose levels are generally too low, you may need to eat more carb or take less diabetes medication.
  - ➔ If your blood glucose levels are sometimes high and sometimes low, you need to keep your carb portion size similar from meal to meal.

Remember; your blood glucose level will go up or down depending on the total amount of carb you eat. Eating lots of lower-carb foods will have the same effect as eating a little high-carb food.

**Carbohydrates:** The carb foods are both starches and sugars. On the hospital menus, these are:

<u>Breakfast</u>	<u>Savoury</u>	<u>Sweet</u>		<u>Drinks</u>
Bread	Bread	Biscuits	Ice cream	Fruit
Cereal	Crackers	Cakes	Mousse	juice
Fruit (all types)	Pasta	Cheesecake	Pies	Milk
Fruit juice	Pastry (pies, quiche)	Crumble	Rice pudding	
Milk	Potato	Custard	Semolina	
Porridge	Rice	Fruit	Sponge	
Yoghurt		Gateau	Yoghurt	

Information on the carbohydrate content of hospital foods is available on request.

### Important Note on Sugar

Sugar and starch are both types of carb and both will affect your blood glucose levels - the more of them you eat, the higher your blood glucose levels will go.

Sugar can taste nice but nutritionally, it only gives the body energy and has no other benefits. Starchy foods, on the other hand, can provide other nutrients, such as vitamins.

To control your blood glucose levels, you will need to be consistent with the amount of carb you eat. It is healthier to get your carbohydrate from starch but to enjoy a varied diet, you can include some sugar as long as your total carb intake (starch + sugar = total carb intake) stays the same as usual.

**Help!** Some people have other dietary needs too; if you are finding it difficult to combine all the different dietary advice, please ask to see the Ward Dietitian.