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Hospital Menu Guidance for Patients with Diabetes Needing Additional Nutrition

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.

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.

The Need for Extra Nutrition

You may need extra nourishment from your food if you are not eating very much, if you are losing weight without meaning to or if you have particular medical conditions. The High Protein/Calorie menu offers foods that contain higher levels of nutrients. **Choose foods that have the code 'P' next to them.** If you are not sure whether or not you need the High Protein/Calorie menu, please ask your nurse.

Getting the Balance Right

In order for you to be as well as possible, it is important that you get the right nutrition and that you have good blood glucose levels too. If you do need additional nutrition, you may need to eat more.

Eating more food or more nutritious food may cause your blood glucose levels to go up. If it is important for you to have this extra nutrition (see above section on The Need for Extra Nutrition) then your diabetes medication may need to go up to keep control of your blood glucose levels. Your Doctor or Diabetes Specialist Nurse is the person who would make that decision. Make sure you are clear on your diabetes medication doses when the time comes for you to go home.

Eating very erratically can send your blood glucose levels too high or too low. To help get the balance right, it is important to try and eat consistently:

- See below for more information on carbohydrate
- Avoid going for long periods without carbohydrate food. Even if you don't feel well enough to eat a meal, there are carbohydrate drinks and snacks that you can have
- Avoid eating a lot of carbohydrate all in one go. A 'little & often' approach is usually best

Carbohydrate

Carbohydrate foods are the ones that work with insulin to give you energy (whether it is insulin made by your body or injected). When carbohydrate, insulin and energy are not in balance then your blood glucose levels will be too high or too low and your body will not function properly.

To help your body; aim to eat similar portions of carbohydrate-rich foods at each meal. You can choose as many types of carbohydrate as you like, as long as the total amount stays roughly the same.

If you do not think you can eat any carbohydrate food at a meal time, ask a nurse for a supplement drink (previously called Build Up, these drinks are now called Meritene). These drinks can be used occasionally to replace a meal, giving you nutrition and helping to prevent your blood glucose level dropping too low.

The carbohydrate-rich foods are 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	

In Future

If you still need extra nutrition when the time comes for you to be discharged from hospital, you can get advice on how to do this at home from the Dietitians. If you are eating well enough, you may not need to continue with the extra nutrition once you are home. If you are not sure, please ask your Ward Doctor or Nurse.

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.