INGREDIENTS FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Easy steps to healthy eating

Myths and facts about diabetes and diet

**MYTH:**
You must avoid sugar at all costs.
Fact: You can enjoy your favorite treats as long as you plan properly. Dessert doesn’t have to be off limits, as long as it’s a part of a healthy meal plan or combined with exercise. Sugar can be eaten if it is taken into consideration as a part of your carbohydrate intake, and adjustments made to other sources of carbohydrates if needed.

**MYTH:**
A high-protein diet is best.
Fact: Studies have shown that eating too much protein, especially animal protein, could contribute to insulin resistance, a key factor in diabetes. A healthy diet includes protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals and vitamins. Our bodies need all of them to function properly. The key is a balanced diet.

**MYTH:**
You have to cut way down on carbs.
Fact: Again, the key is to eat a balanced diet. The serving size and the type of carbohydrates you eat are especially important. Focus on whole grain carbs since they are a good source of fiber.

**MYTH:**
People with diabetes need special foods for people with diabetes.
Fact: The principles of healthy eating are the same - whether or not you are trying to prevent or control diabetes. Expensive foods for people with diabetes generally offer no special benefit.

A healthy lifestyle reduces the risk of developing diabetes and its complications.
A healthy lifestyle is also essential for diabetes management and care.
Do not skip breakfast and eat regular meals throughout the day.

Reduce the portion size of your meals and snacks. Bigger food and beverage portions have more calories. Consuming extra calories can lead to obesity, putting you at risk for diabetes.

Eat slowly. It’s a wonderful way to savour your food – and to eat less.

Whenever possible, avoid packaged or prepared foods. Cook at home with fresh ingredients as much as you can.

Eat healthful, high-fibre carbs, such as whole grain breads, oatmeal, quinoa, brown rice or whole meal pasta. These offer substantial health benefits.

Choose reduced fat and low-fat dairy products.

Choose lean meats and alternatives, such as skinless chicken or turkey, eggs, legumes (beans, lentils) or tofu.

Include at least two portions of vegetables and three of fruits every day.

Include at least two portions of fish a week, including one of oily fish such as salmon, tunna or sardines. Go for steamed, baked or grilled fish or shellfish, rather than fried.

Include some of the healthy (unsaturated) fats like olive, canola or sunflower oil, flax seed or flax seed oil, oily fish, avocado, seeds and nuts.

Cut back on the salt you add while cooking or at the table. For packaged foods, be sure to read the label and choose the option with the least sodium.

Save baked foods like cakes, biscuits and desserts for special occasions. Eat them in small portions, even if they are low in fat. Low-fat baked goods are still high in sugar.

Drink water and make sure you stay well hydrated. The best hydration comes from non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverages, soups and watery foods such as fruit and vegetables. Limit alcoholic drinks to one beer or glass of wine per day, with some alcohol-free days each week. Limit sugary drinks as much as possible, both in their regular or diet versions.

Enjoy festive meals without guilt. Just return to your more healthful habits at the next meal. It’s all about balance and moderation!

Together with a healthy and balanced diet and a sufficient amount of sleep, regular physical activity is an essential ingredient for a healthy lifestyle. No need to become a professional athlete! Incorporating just 30 minutes of activity into your daily life will be beneficial.