

## What should you avoid?

- Too much salt. This can lead to an increase in blood pressure.
- Too much saturated fat is linked to:
  - Increased cholesterol levels, leading to an increased risk of heart disease.
  - Weight gain.

Being overweight creates its own health risks, but it also makes a difference to your diabetes control:

- In your body, insulin seems to find moving sugar out of your blood into fatty tissue particularly difficult; so the more weight you carry, the more insulin you may need to inject.
- Of course, the opposite is true too; if you lose weight, you should need less insulin. That's why blood sugar testing is so important when you are on a diet.



Anyone who uses an Abbott Diabetes Care meter can become a member of our **Friends for Life programme.**

Once a member, you are entitled to:

- FREE help and advice
- FREE replacement products and batteries
- FREE monitoring support
- FREE educational materials

To join, send back the warranty card that came with your Abbott Diabetes Care meter. Or, call the Customer Care Line or register online at [www.friendsforlife.org.uk](http://www.friendsforlife.org.uk)

**UK Customer Care Line – 0500 467 466**

(Mon-Fri, 8am-5.30pm)

**Ireland Customer Care Line – 1 800 776633**

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Leaflet produced by Abbott Diabetes Care, manufacturer of



**FreeStyle mini**  
Blood Glucose Monitoring System



**Optium Xceed™**

Ask your nurse or pharmacist for more information



## Healthy eating and diabetes



## Food - how it affects the sugar in your blood

The experts say a healthy diet for someone with diabetes is the same as a healthy diet for anyone else. It's normal food with plenty of fruit and vegetables, keeping your intake of fats, sugars and salt well in check.

But when you have diabetes, it's important to understand how what you eat affects your blood sugar (glucose).

So where does the sugar in your blood come from? There are two main sources:

- **Digesting the carbohydrates you eat**

Carbohydrates form the main source of sugar in your blood.

- Starchy carbohydrates (found in wholemeal bread or pasta, for example) are broken down into sugars and absorbed slowly. This slow absorption keeps blood sugar levels smoother.
- Carbohydrates in sugary foods (such as cakes or sweets) are absorbed quickly, making your blood sugar levels rise more sharply.

- **Producing sugar inside your body**

Your body can also produce a sugar (called glycogen) internally from a special store in the liver. **Glycogen** is your body's emergency sugar store. If your blood sugar falls too low, your liver immediately starts breaking down your glycogen stores to make sugar.



## Where does the sugar go?

Sugar is your body's main fuel. Your muscles and brain need it, just like a car needs petrol. Your blood carries sugar round your body to where it is needed.

To get the sugar out of your blood and into your tissues, you need insulin. Insulin either:

- Moves the sugar from your blood into your muscles and brain for energy.
- Or stores it in your liver (as glycogen).
- Or stores it under your skin and around your organs as fat.

When you treat your diabetes with insulin, you try to match the action of insulin you inject with the food you eat.

When you take tablets to treat Type 2 diabetes, you must eat regularly to match the effect of your tablets.

## What else should you eat in a healthy diet?

In addition to carbohydrates you need to eat:

- **Fruit and vegetables** - The government recommends eating five different portions of fruit and vegetables every day. Try to spread your intake of fruit out over the day to avoid any sudden rises in your blood sugar levels.
- **Meat, fish and protein alternatives (e.g. Quorn and tofu)** - Eat a variety of proteins and choose low fat options where you can, for instance:
  - Lean ham in preference to pork pies.
  - Chicken without the skin.
  - Pulses (lentils and beans).
- **Milk and dairy foods** - Dairy products such as yoghurt and milk contain calcium, needed for healthy bones and teeth. Adults should look for the low fat versions.
- **Small amounts of fats, sugars and salt:**
  - Don't cut out fats completely, but reduce your intake right down.
  - Use herbs for extra flavour rather than salt.
  - Cut down on sugar where you can. You might try some of the intense sweeteners instead. (Vary the brands rather than sticking to one type so that you don't exceed the government's recommended 'Acceptable Daily Intake' levels for artificial sweeteners.)