

# Diabetes and sugar

Eating well for people with type 2 diabetes is no different than for everyone else.

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating encourages all Australians to limit food and drinks high in sugar.

A balanced diet can still include sugar, even if you have diabetes. However, too much sugar can cause unstable blood glucose (sugar) levels, weight gain and tooth decay.

- Sugar has many forms, including:
  - white, raw and brown sugar
  - honey
  - syrups, such as corn syrup, rice malt syrup and maple syrup.

Here are some ways to reduce the amount of sugar you eat.

## Limit foods high in sugar

- Foods high in sugar are generally low in nutrients. Eat foods like lollies, cakes, biscuits, chocolates, jam, and lollies only sometimes and in small amounts.
- When you do eat these foods, share them with your friends and family!
- Use less sugar in recipes. In most recipes, the sugar can be halved without changing the texture. Try adding vanilla essence, cinnamon, cloves or nutmeg to add flavour in recipes.

## Look at food labels

- Look at the ingredients list. Ingredients are listed from most to least in quantity.
- Try to limit or avoid foods in which the main ingredient is sugar (such as lollies).
- Other names for sugar in the ingredients list include:
  - dextrose
  - fructose
  - glucose
  - lactose
  - sucrose
  - malt
  - honey
  - molasses
- Fruit, milk and yoghurt have natural sugars but are still a good choice. This is because they contain other healthy minerals and vitamins like calcium and vitamin C. Fruit also contains fibre, which helps to control your blood glucose levels.

## Choose drinks low in sugar

- The best choices include water, milk, tea and coffee.
- Limit high sugar drinks such as cordial and soft drink.
- Fruit juice has a high amount of natural sugar that can raise blood glucose levels. If you drink fruit juice, limit the amount you have and dilute it by adding water.

## Artificial sweeteners

- Artificial sweeteners are found in many foods and drinks labelled 'sugar free' or 'diet'. This includes yoghurts, diet soft drinks and sugar-free lollies.
- Artificial sweeteners are not needed to manage your diabetes.
- They are often used because they do not have the same effect on blood glucose (sugar) levels and are generally lower in energy.
- Artificial sweeteners are considered safe for humans to eat, but are found in processed (sometimes) foods, which we should eat less frequently.
- Artificial sweeteners can have a laxative effect and cause diarrhoea.