

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.