

Diabetes - Dietary Advice for Pre Diabetes

This dietary advice sheet gives some general information to help you make the recommended changes to your diet. If you need more detailed advice or if you are following a special diet that makes it difficult to make these changes, please ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian

If you have **pre diabetes** your body is not controlling your blood glucose (sugar) properly resulting in your glucose being raised.

Pre diabetes is diagnosed following a blood test called an HbA1c. You have pre diabetes if your HbA1c is:

above 42mmol/mol and
below 48mmol/mol

This is too low to diagnose diabetes.

You have diabetes only if:

- **Your HbA1c is over 48mmol/mol**

You should be offered a regular blood test to check your HbA1c.

Risk factors for pre diabetes

A family history of diabetes, poor diet, being overweight and not being active enough are all risk factors for pre diabetes.

Insulin

The hormone insulin controls glucose levels. If you have pre diabetes it means that you are either not producing enough insulin or your body is not using it properly - this is called insulin resistance.

You can help to overcome insulin resistance by:

- Losing weight
- Improving your diet
- Being more active

With pre diabetes there is an increased risk of developing diabetes. You can reduce this risk by making the changes suggested above.

Dietary Advice

- Eat regular meals and include a portion of starchy food at each meal, such as bread, pasta, potatoes, rice or breakfast cereals. Starchy food should make up $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of a main meal.
- Avoid added sugar and sugary foods (see table below).
* These items should be eaten sparingly if you need to lose weight
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables – all fruit contains natural sugar so spread your fruit intake through the day.
Aim to include regular, peas, beans and lentils – these release glucose slowly – see overleaf.
- If you are overweight, cut down on fats. Use small amounts of monounsaturated fats and oils, such as olive oil and rapeseed oil. Avoid saturated fats including butter, lard, suet and ghee. Avoid fried foods, cut fat off meat and limit pastry, cakes and biscuits. Choose low-fat milk and cheese.
- Low-fat foods have less than 3g fat per 100g of food. However, be careful of foods that are labelled 'low fat', such as biscuits, cakes, desserts, and ice-cream. These foods often contain a lot of sugar and are not suitable for your diet.

Dietary Advice for Pre Diabetes

Carbohydrate and blood glucose control

Almost all of the glucose in your blood comes from the carbohydrate that you eat and drink.

There are 2 main forms of carbohydrates in our diet: sugars and starches.

Sugars

- Sugars added to foods and drinks– **these should be kept to a minimum** as they result in a quick increase in blood glucose.
- Sugars found naturally in milk and fruits – **these can still be included as part of a healthy diet but in moderate amounts.**

Starchy foods

- Examples include bread, potatoes, pasta/noodles, flour, oats, rice and other grains – quinoa, couscous etc.

Starchy carbohydrates are an important part of your diet but the **type** and **portion size** will directly affect your blood glucose level.

Type - some types of starchy foods release their glucose slowly; good choices would be, new potatoes, granary bread, pasta, basmati rice, porridge

Portions - A meal containing a large portion of carbohydrate (or a combination of various types of carbohydrates) will increase your blood sugar much more than a meal containing a smaller amount.

Be aware of your portion sizes; 1 portion is:

- Bread 1 medium slice
- Breakfast cereals 3 tablespoons
- Scone 1 small
- Crackers 2 pieces e.g. crispbread, cream crackers, rice cakes
- Muesli 2 tbsp
- Potatoes 2 boiled egg sized/ 2tbsp mashed/ 1 medium jacket
- Porridge 3 cooked tbsp.
- Pasta, rice, cous cous 2-3 cooked tbsp.

Remember to include starchy food at each meal and spread evenly throughout the day. Aim for 5-8 portions a day e.g.

Breakfast 6 tbsp cooked porridge = 2 portions

Lunch 2 slices granary bread for a sandwich = 2 portions

Evening 4 egg sized, new potatoes = 2 portions