

Diabetes: Understanding the Basics

What is Diabetes?

- Diabetes is a problem with how your body handles sugar (glucose).
- There are several types of diabetes including Type 1, Type 2 and Gestational.
- Diabetes can also be caused by certain medications including steroids, chemotherapy and others.

What is the difference between Type 1 and Type 2?

Type 1 Diabetes is an autoimmune disease caused when your immune system attacks the cells (beta cells) in your pancreas that make insulin. People with Type 1 diabetes need to take insulin to replace what their body can no longer make.

Type 2 Diabetes occurs over time. Family history, weight gain, lack of physical activity, and stress can increase your risk of developing Type 2. In Type 2 diabetes, your pancreas still makes insulin, but your body doesn't use it well. The cells in your body are "resistant" and need insulin to keep blood sugar levels normal. People with Type 2 can take care of their diabetes with exercise, eating healthy, pills, and sometimes insulin.

What is Gestational Diabetes?

Gestational diabetes can occur when you are pregnant. Most women are screened for Gestational Diabetes early in pregnancy. Pregnancy hormones cause the body to become resistant to insulin leading to higher blood sugar levels. This can often be controlled with a specific meal plan, but may also require insulin. It goes away after you have the baby, but is an early sign that you are at higher risk for getting Type 2 diabetes in the future.

What is Insulin?

Insulin is a hormone made in your pancreas. It works like a key to unlock your cells and allow glucose (sugar) into the cell. Without insulin, the sugar just stays in your blood. All humans need insulin to live.

What is Glucose?

Glucose (sugar) is our body's main source of energy- like gasoline is to a car. Glucose from the food we eat (carbohydrates) and is produced in our liver, and is stored in muscle cells.

What is the Pancreas?

The pancreas is an organ in your body. The pancreas makes insulin and other hormones needed to break down and get energy from the foods you eat.

Monitor your blood sugar

- **Monitor regularly.**
- Keep a record of your blood sugars and work with your health care team to correct levels that are too high or too low.

Make time to be active

- **Exercise regularly:** Do some form of physical activity every day.
- Exercise at least 30 minutes a day.
- Walking is a great way to start!

**Eating healthy, regular exercise and taking medication as prescribed
will help you to control your diabetes!**

Label Reading

Use the **Nutrition Facts** on food labels to figure out how to work a food into your meal plan. Learn about what foods are healthier choices by looking at the label.

Look at the **serving size** and the **total carbohydrate** (carbs)

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (35g)	
Servings Per Container 12	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 130	Calories from Fat 27
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 4g	7%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 1g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 200mg	8%
Total Carbohydrate 30g	10%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 18g	
Sugar Alcohols 2g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A	25%
Vitamin C	25%
Calcium	0%
Iron	10%

Ingredients: UNBLEACHED ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMINE MONONITRATE {VITAMIN B1}, RIBOFLAVIN {VITAMIN B2}, FOLIC ACID), SOYBEAN OIL, PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED COTTONSEED OIL, SEA SALT, SALT, MALTED BARLEY FLOUR, BAKING SODA, YEAST.

Serving size: Always check the serving size and compare to what you really eat.

Calories: Less is usually better

⊗**Saturated Fat:** raises LDL (bad) cholesterol

⊗**Trans Fat:** raises LDL and lowers HDL (good) cholesterol.

Sodium: Aim for less than 1500mg per day.

Total Carbohydrate: Important fuel for your body.

☺**Dietary Fiber:** Aim for at least 3-5g per serving.

Sugar Alcohols: Still affects blood sugar

Check the ingredient list for partially-hydrogenated oils (Trans Fat)

Ingredient list is listed by weight

Less = Better

Make healthy food choices

- **Eat a variety of foods.** Choose plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low fat milk products, and lean meat and meat alternatives.
- **Avoid skipping meals.** Eat 3 small meals and a snack consistently and around the same time each day. Try not to go longer than 4-6 hours without eating.
- **Watch your portions.** Check the nutrition fact labels for appropriate serving sizes. Your meals should consist of 45-75 grams of carbohydrates (meet with a dietitian to tailor a plan for you) and snacks should consist of 15-30 grams of carbohydrates.
- **Don't drink your carbs.** Avoid regular soda, juice, sport drinks or any beverages that contain calories/carbohydrates. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, flavored water, or artificially sweetened beverages if necessary.

Focus on carbohydrates

- Carbohydrates are important! Carbohydrates provide the body with the energy it needs for physical activity and proper organ function.
- Food sources of carbohydrates include grains, fruits, starchy vegetables (i.e. potatoes, corn, and peas), legumes (beans and lentils), milk, yogurt and milk products (i.e. soy milk, rice milk), sweets and many beverages.

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