



Health Point:

**Managing Diabetes with
Proper Nutrition**

What is diabetes?

- Diabetes is a health condition that causes sugar to build up in your blood, instead of being used by your body.
 - Your blood has **insulin** in it, to help use sugar from the food that you eat.
 - If you have diabetes, your body can not use sugar in the way that it should.

There are two types of diabetes.

- If you have **Type 1 diabetes**, your body does not make any insulin.
- If you have **Type 2 diabetes**:
 - Your body does not produce enough insulin, or
 - Your body does produce insulin, but it does not use it correctly.

A special diet can help people with diabetes to stay healthy.

- If you have diabetes, a special diet can help you to have the right level of sugar in your blood.
- Your supports or family members can help you follow your diet, by making sure that you eat the right foods in the right amounts.

A nutritionist or a certified diabetic educator can help you develop a diet that is right for you.

- Two common nutrition plans for people with diabetes are the “exchange list” plan and the “carbohydrate counting” plan.
- These are examples of nutrition plans used by people on insulin.

One special diet uses an “Exchange List.”

- Exchange lists separate foods into different groups:
 - For example, meats, fats and carbohydrates.
- Your doctor or nutritionist will give you a personal meal plan that lists how much food you need to eat from each group every day.

You can use an exchange list to choose your meals.

- Your personal meal plan will tell you how many meat, fat or carbohydrate “exchanges” you need to eat at each meal.
- Suppose you planned to eat 2 meat exchanges: your exchange list will tell you what foods you can eat to make up the 2 meat exchanges.

Another diet is called “Carbohydrate Counting.”

- Carbohydrate counting means you, or somebody who supports you, counts the number of carbohydrates in your meal before you eat.
 - Most packaged foods list carbohydrate amounts on the label.
- Your doctor will tell you how much insulin to take for the number of carbohydrates you plan to eat.

Talk to your doctor about how diet can help you manage diabetes.

- If you have diabetes and do not have a special diet, ask your doctor or nutritionist if a special diet will be right for you.
- Understanding your diet and following it every day can help you keep your diabetes under control and stay safe and healthy!