



Diabetes Education Teaching Guide

What Can I Eat?



Question #1

True or False? People with diabetes aren't allowed to eat any carbohydrates.

Answer #1

True or False? People with diabetes aren't allowed to eat any carbohydrates.

False

Question #2

“HFCS” stands for:

- A. High Fiber Carrot Soup
- B. High Fructose Corn Syrup
- C. Heavily Fortified Carbohydrate System

Answer #2

“HFCS” stands for:

- A. High Fiber Carrot Soup
- B. High Fructose Corn Syrup**
- C. Heavily Fortified Carbohydrate System

Question #3

True or False? If a person with diabetes is looking to lose weight, they need to make lifestyle changes that involve both diet and exercise.

Answer #3

True or False? If a person with diabetes is looking to lose weight, they need to make lifestyle changes that involve both diet and exercise.

True

Question #4

High fructose corn syrup can be found as an ingredient in:

- A. Bread
- B. Soft drinks
- C. Yogurt
- D. Salad dressing
- E. Soup
- F. All of the above

Answer #4

High fructose corn syrup can be found as an ingredient in:

- A. Bread
- B. Soft drinks
- C. Yogurt
- D. Salad dressing
- E. Soup
- F. All of the above**

Question #5

As part of your diabetes management team, you should include:

- A. A certified diabetes educator and a registered dietitian
- B. A scientist and a marketing coordinator
- C. An emotional support team
- D. A & C
- E. None of the above

Answer #5

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- B. A scientist and a marketing coordinator
- C. An emotional support team
- D. A & C**
- E. None of the above

Question #6

True or False? Being diagnosed with diabetes means you are sentenced to a life of rigid and restrictive meal plans.

Answer #6

True or False? Being diagnosed with diabetes means you are sentenced to a life of rigid and restrictive meal plans.

False

”What can I eat?”

This is often the mantra of a person with diabetes, whether they are newly diagnosed or a veteran at diabetes management.

It would be nice if diabetes was more like a food allergy and you could simply avoid one type of food, take your meds, and you’d be all set. Instead, diabetes means a 24-hour-a-day balancing act between blood sugar levels and an entire category of foods (carbohydrates). Not surprisingly, one of the first questions newly diagnosed patients ask is “What can I eat?”

For people with diabetes who need to take off some weight, those dietary changes typically involve both calorie and carbohydrate control (and should, of course, be combined with an appropriate exercise plan). A registered dietitian, preferably one who is also a certified diabetes educator (CDE) or is experienced in diabetes care, is an essential resource for learning more about individualized menu planning and good food choices to help you best manage your weight, if necessary, and your diabetes.

The good news is that the best diet for a person with diabetes is really the same kind of healthy eating that is best for everyone. Like the general population, people with diabetes need to focus on whole foods that are high in fiber and nutrient-dense – meaning natural nourishment that gives you the most health and nutrition “bang” for your calories “buck.” This includes virtually all plant foods, most dairy products, lean meat and poultry, and fish. Conversely, we all need to keep highly processed foods, which are often full of refined flour and sugar, to a minimum.

For people living with diabetes, processed foods can contain higher levels of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). It’s sweeter than sweet and inexpensive to boot, so food and beverage manufacturers use HFCS in virtually everything they make – from soft drinks (including “fruit” drinks) to jams, crackers, bread, yogurt, salad dressing, and even soup. Some research has suggested that fructose is not metabolized in the same way other sugars are, and that the proliferation of HFCS may be a contributing factor to our country’s obesity problem.

On the surface, it would seem that a sugar that doesn't raise blood glucose and insulin would be a godsend for people with diabetes. However, like most things, it's not that simple. First, fructose is combined with glucose and other sugars to make HFCS. Second, in animal studies, rodents fed large amounts of fructose became insulin resistant (a precursor to diabetes) and developed high triglycerides. Combine this with the idea that fructose may suppress the release of the appetite-regulating hormone leptin and you've got a prescription for upping obesity and diabetes risks.

As a result of these added sugars, people with diabetes are taking note. Getting your sugars from natural, healthy sources is the safest way to eat. Over the last decade, the number of farmer's markets has doubled. Consumers are searching for more locally grown groceries, including grass-fed beef and organic produce.

According to the USDA website, organic farming entails:

- Use of cover crops, green manures, animal manures and crop rotations to fertilize the soil, maximize biological activity and maintain long-term soil health.
- Use of biological control, crop rotations and other techniques to manage weeds, insects and diseases.
- An emphasis on biodiversity of the agricultural system and the surrounding environment.
- Using rotational grazing and mixed forage pastures for livestock operations and alternative health care for animal well-being.
- Reduction of external and off-farm inputs and elimination of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers and other materials, such as hormones and antibiotics.
- A focus on renewable resources, soil and water conservation, and management practices that restore, maintain, and enhance ecological balance.

Eating locally grown, organic foods can help limit the number of high fructose corn syrup in your diet and should contribute to a healthier diabetes life. Keep in mind that diabetes is not a life sentence to a rigid and restrictive meal plan. Instead, nutritional management of diabetes is a lifestyle change balancing moderation and healthy food choices.

A registered dietitian, preferably one who is also a certified diabetes educator and/or is experienced in diabetes care, is an essential resource for learning more about individualized menu planning and food choices with diabetes. Ask your medical team for some help on creating a healthy eating plan that works best for you.

Question #1

True or False? Eating locally grown, organic foods can help limit the amount of high fructose corn syrup in your diet and could contribute to a healthier diabetes life.

Answer #1

True or False? Eating locally grown, organic foods can help limit the amount of high fructose corn syrup in your diet and could contribute to a healthier diabetes life.

True

Question #2

True or False? Living with diabetes means a lifestyle of balancing moderation and healthy food choices.

Answer #2

True or False? Living with diabetes means a lifestyle of balancing moderation and healthy food choices.

True

Question #3

In animal studies, rodents fed large amounts of fructose became _____ and developed high triglycerides:

- A. Insulin resistant
- B. Cancerous
- C. Albino

Answer #3

In animal studies, rodents fed large amounts of fructose became _____ and developed high triglycerides:

- A. Insulin resistant**
- B. Cancerous
- C. Albino

Question #4

Fructose may suppress the release of leptin, an _____-regulating hormone:

- A. Energy
- B. Glucose
- C. Appetite

Answer #4

Fructose may suppress the release of leptin,
an _____-regulating hormone:

- A. Energy
- B. Glucose
- C. Appetite**

Question #5

Name three types of whole foods that are high in fiber and nutrient-dense.

Answer #5

Name three types of whole foods that are high in fiber and nutrient-dense.

1. Virtually all plant foods
2. Most dairy products
3. Lean meat
4. Poultry
5. Fish

Question #6

True or False? Creating a diabetes-friendly meal plan means removing everything that tastes good.

Answer #6

True or False? Creating a diabetes-friendly meal plan means removing everything that tastes good.

False

1. Put your money where your mouth is. Using sample menus from some of your group's favorite restaurants and with the help of a registered dietitian, work as a group to choose restaurant meals that are both delicious and diabetes-friendly.
2. Use visual aids. Do you know how big a "medium-sized apple" really is? Teach your eyes to recognize proper portion sizes. Start by measuring everything diligently for a week until your group gets a feel for portion sizes. Then test yourself against the measuring cup.
3. Bring in food labels and ingredient panels from some of your patients' favorite foods. See how many have refined flours and sugar. Compare with healthier alternatives.

If you have other activities you'd like to share, email us at ercc@dlife.com.

- *Homegrown Pure and Simple: Great Healthy Foods from Garden to Table.* Michel Nischan with Mary Goodbody. (Copyright 2005, Chronicle Books)
- *Staying Healthy with Diabetes — Nutrition & Meal Planning.* Amy P. Campbell, MS, RD, CDE and the Staff of Joslin Diabetes Center. (Copyright 2007, Joslin Diabetes Center)
- Learn more about diabetes and meal-planning at www.dlife.com/eatingright
- Looking for some diabetes-friendly meals you can enjoy with your family? Visit the dLife Recipe Box at <http://www.dlife.com/diabetes/diabetic-recipes/index.html>.