

# Diabetes



## WHAT IS DIABETES

When sugars from food are digested, they are absorbed into the blood stream. Insulin is a hormone that takes sugar from the blood to other cells in the body to be used as fuel for energy.

Diabetes is a serious, lifelong condition where the body either doesn't make enough insulin or the insulin it does make doesn't work properly. If left untreated, high levels of sugar in the blood can cause serious health complications.

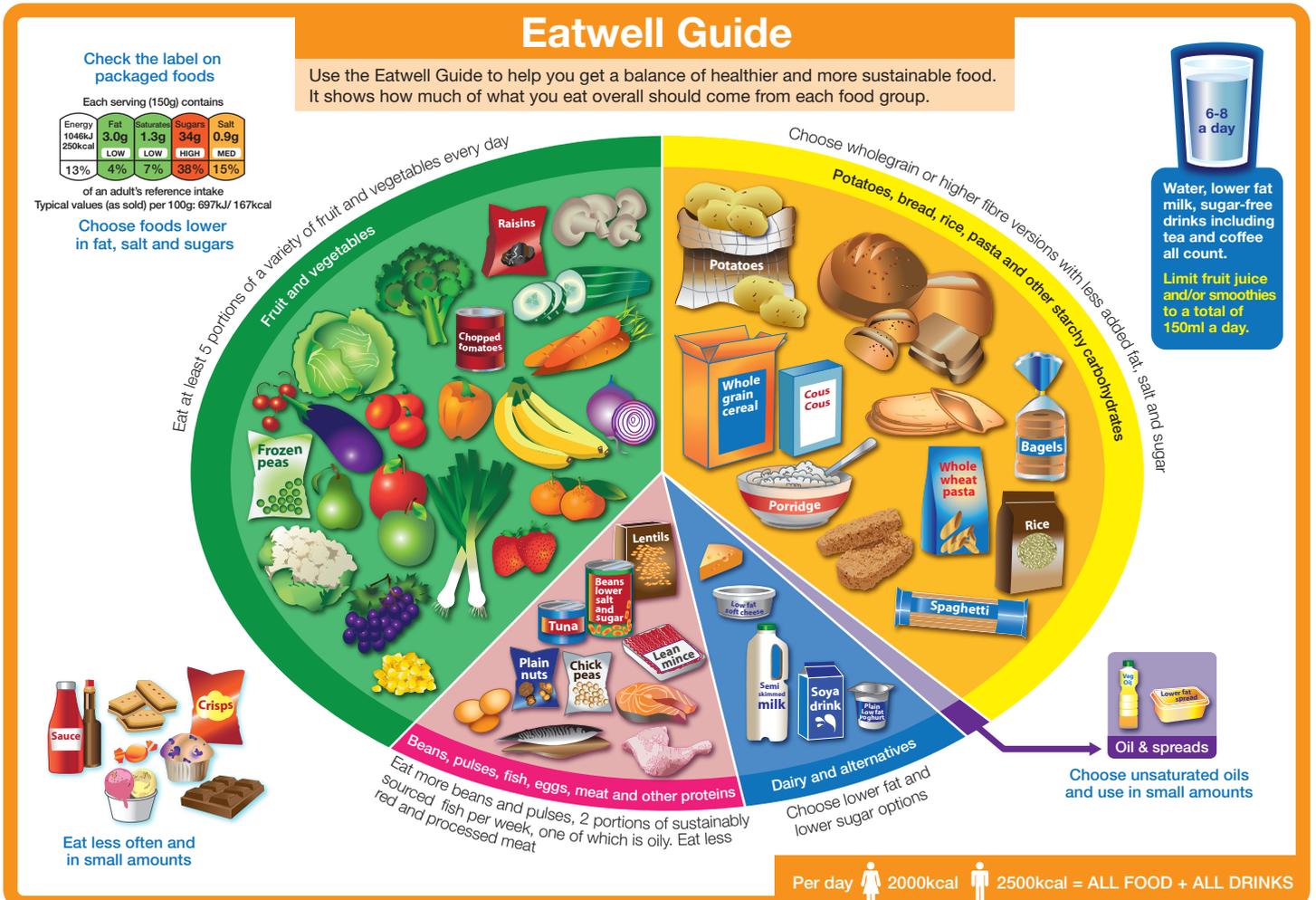
## HOW MANY PEOPLE DOES IT EFFECT?

Since 1996, the number of people diagnosed with diabetes in the UK has more than doubled from 1.4 million to almost 3.5 million. There is also thought to be about 1 million people with undiagnosed diabetes too.

## THE EATWELL GUIDE

The Eatwell Guide shows the different types of foods and drinks, and in what proportions, to have a healthy, balanced diet. The proportions shown represent food intake over a period of a day or even a week, not necessarily each meal.

The Eat well Guide divides the foods and drinks you provide for your residents in to five main groups. Try to offer a variety of different foods from each of the groups to help them get the wide range of nutrients their body needs to function properly.



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## CARING FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

The dietary advice for people with diabetes is to reach and maintain a healthy weight and to follow a healthy balanced diet which is the same advice given to the rest of the population.

Having diabetes doesn't mean sugar has to be completely avoided, it can be included as part of a balanced diet.

Choose healthier cooking methods such as steaming rather than boiling and grilling instead of deep frying. Microwaving can be a healthier option too as food is cooked much quicker therefore vitamin retention is maximised.

## DIABETIC FOOD

Avoid 'diabetic food', they offer no benefit to people with diabetes. Since July 2016, it is no longer possible to label foods as 'diabetic'. This is because:

- These foods can be expensive
- They can also be as high in fat and calories as standard
- They can still raise blood sugar levels
- They can contradict general healthy advice, which is to eat foods high in sugar and/or fat less often and in small amounts
- Some diabetic foods can have a laxative effect if eaten in excess

## CATERING TIPS TO HELP RESIDENTS WITH DIABETES EAT WELL

- Offer regular and evenly spaced meals and snacks throughout the day
- Provide starchy carbohydrates such as bread, rice, potatoes and pasta with every meal. Include a variety of wholegrain options to increase fibre intakes
- Although some fat is needed in the diet, limit the amount of saturated fat from foods like butter, cheese, processed meats, cakes and biscuits. Too much saturated fat can increase the risk of heart disease
- Offer at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Serve as accompaniments at each meal time and offer as snacks too
- Limit the amount of salt. Don't add salt during cooking, your residents can add it to their meals if they choose to
- Offer at least 2 portions of oily fish each week such as salmon, mackerel and sardines. Oily fish contain omega 3 fats which can help reduce the risk of heart disease
- Beans, pulses and lentils are good sources of protein so add kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils to your dishes. They are also high in fibre, low in fat and can control blood fat levels
- Sugary foods don't need to be totally excluded, small and occasional portions of cakes, desserts and biscuits are acceptable. Look out for reduced sugar or sugar free products and try artificial sweeteners instead of sugar in foods and drinks
- Keep your residents hydrated, offer them at least 6- 8 drinks each day. They should be available with every meal and regularly in between meals too. Water, milk, squash, fruit juice (no more than 150ml) tea and coffee all count towards fluid intake

