



LIVING WITH DIABETES

By Mohamed Shalaby, M.D.

If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, it's important that you make the right food choices to maintain healthy blood sugar levels and overall health. Here are some tips to help!

#1 Choose plant-based foods over animal-based foods. Eating a Mediterranean-style diet—high in fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes and olive oil and low in red meat, poultry and animal fats—has been found to reduce the need for blood-glucose lowering medications in people with type 2 diabetes.

#2: Go for whole grains rather than refined ones. Refined grains—such as white flour, rice and pasta—don't offer much nutritional value and can send blood glucose soaring.

Whole grains like oat flour, brown rice and whole-wheat pasta, on the other hand, are rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

#3: Use a healthier spread on bread. Avoid products that contain a lot of saturated fat, like butter and cream cheese, and regular margarine, which contains trans fats. Your best substitutes are trans-fat-free margarines or those that contain plant stanols or sterols.

#4: Get your D from dairy. In addition to providing calcium, dairy products are a good source of vitamin D. Recent research has linked vitamin D deficiency with a greater likelihood of developing serious complications, like cardiovascular disease, if you have type 2 diabetes.

#5: Substitute a sweet potato for a white one. Sweet potatoes recently made the American Diabetic Association's (ADA) list of "super foods," and it's easy to see why. They have a lower glycemic index than regular potatoes, meaning they don't raise your blood glucose levels as much. They're also rich in carotenoids, which are important for eye health; the natural plant compound chlorogenic acid, which may help reduce insulin resistance; and potassium, which lowers blood pressure. ●

There's a difference between serving size and portion size. A serving is a standard amount of food containing a set amount of calories; a portion is what you actually put on your plate. So a portion could be a lot more than a single serving—and can contain a lot more calories than you might expect.

Dr. Mohamed Shalaby is a nationally recognized board certified and fellowship trained cardiologist with 20 years of experience in cardiovascular medicine. For more information or to consult with Dr. Shalaby, visit his website, www.drshalaby.com or call 281.956.7070.