

A Lower Carbohydrate Diet for Type 2 Diabetes

This page of diet advice was adapted from a publication produced by the team at Norwood Surgery led by Dr David Unwin. Full citation at base of page.

In this condition your metabolism can no longer deal with sugar, which becomes almost a poison – so its consumption needs cutting back dramatically.

Sugar, cut it out altogether. Although it will be in the blueberries, strawberries and raspberries you are allowed to eat. Cakes and biscuits are a mixture of sugar and starch that make it almost impossible to avoid food cravings; they just make you hungrier!!

Reduce starchy carbs a lot. Remember they digest down into surprising amounts of sugar. If possible cut out the “White stuff” like bread, pasta, rice and breakfast cereals.

All green veg/salads are fine – eat as much as you can, turn the white stuff green

So that you still eat a good big dinner try substituting veg such as broccoli, courgettes or green beans for your mash, pasta or rice – still covering them with your gravy, Bolognese or curry!

Tip: try home-made soup – it can be taken to work for lunch and microwaved. Mushrooms, tomatoes, and onions can be included in this. Aldi and Tesco now sell cauliflower rice!

Fruit is trickier...

Some tropical fruits like bananas, oranges, grapes, mangoes or pineapples have too much sugar in and can set those carb cravings off. Berries are better and can be eaten; blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, apples and pears too.

Eat healthy proteins...

Such as in meat, eggs (three eggs a day is not too much), fish – particularly oily fish such as salmon, mackerel or tuna - are fine and can be eaten freely. Plain **full fat** yoghurt makes a good breakfast with the berries. Processed meats such as bacon, ham, sausages or salami are not as healthy and should only be eaten in moderation.

Fats are fine in moderation...

Olive oil is very useful, may be tastier than margarine and could be better for you! Coconut oil is great for stir fries. Four essential vitamins A, D, E and K are only found in some fats and oils. Please avoid margarine, corn oil and vegetable oil.

Beware of “low fat” foods. They often have sugar or sweeteners added to make them palatable. Full fat mayonnaise and pesto are definitely on!!

Cheese: only in moderation... It is a very calorific mixture of fat and protein.

Snacks: avoid, as habit forming. But un-salted nuts such as almonds or walnuts are OK to starve off hunger. The occasional treat of strong dark chocolate 70% or more in small quantity is allowed.

EATING LOTS OF VEG WITH PROTEIN AND HEALTHY FATS LEAVES YOU PROPERLY FULL IN A WAY THAT LASTS.

Finally, about sweeteners and what to drink – sweeteners have been proven to tease you brain into being even hungrier, making weight loss more difficult. Avoid fruit juice. Drink tea, coffee, and water or herb teas (100ml of milk is 1 teaspoon of sugar). Alcoholic drinks are often full of carbohydrate – for example, beer is almost “liquid toast” hence the beer belly!! Perhaps the odd glass of red wine wouldn't be too bad if it doesn't make you get hungry afterwards – or just plain or sparkling water with a slice of lemon.

On medication? Remember to check this diet with your GP or practice nurse

P.S. some folk need more salt on a lower carb diet

Unwin D, Khalid AA, Unwin J, *et al*

Insights from a general practice service evaluation supporting a lower carbohydrate diet in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus and prediabetes: a secondary analysis of routine clinic data including HbA1c, weight and prescribing over 6 years

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Where to start with low carb

If you take Insulin or a Sulfonylurea (Gliclazide/Glibenclamide/Glimepiride/Glipizide/Tolbutamide) you need to be careful your sugar levels don't go too low. You may need to reduce your dose or come off this medication. If you take any of these or an SGLT2 inhibitor (Dapagliflozin, Canagliflozin, Empagliflozin, Ertugliflozin) then discuss with your doctor or nurse before significantly cutting out carbohydrates.

www.newforestpcn.co.uk/low-carb

01

Stop drinking sugar

When you drink it is easy to consume a lot of sugar very quickly, you don't even need to chew! Some of the sugar can even enter the bloodstream before you swallow with levels in the blood rising quickly after drinking. The main offenders are fruit juice and fruit smoothies along with any non-diet soft drinks.



- Fruit Juice & Smoothies
- Non-diet soft drinks
- Sweet Wine
- Beer & Cider



- Water
- Black Tea
- Black Coffee
- Herbal Tea

02

from closer to home

Fruits can contain large amounts of sugar but there is a wide variation in how much different fruits contain. As a rule fruits grown in more tropical environments contain more sugar per portion. Therefore, eating fruit grown in colder climates will tend to mean consuming less sugar. Dried fruits have most of the water removed and so contain highly concentrated sugar and should be avoided.



- Banana
- Pineapple
- Grapes
- Dried Fruit



- Raspberry
- Strawberry
- Apple

Eat fruit

03

Start by looking at breakfast

Bread and breakfast cereals are broken down to significant amounts of sugar. Even porridge is not a great option as although the sugar is released more slowly it still enters the bloodstream. High sugar levels after breakfast cause increased insulin levels which then make you hungry mid-morning. It can be great to break this cycle to aid with weight loss.



- Bread
- Cereals
- Porridge
- Tropical Fruit
- Fruit Juice



- Natural Yogurt
- Nuts/Berries
- Egg
- Mushroom
- Bacon

04

Avoid "double carb" meals

Some traditional meals contain significantly more carbohydrates than others. Remember that all carbohydrate is broken down into sugar. Double carb meals are things like battered fish and chips, pie and mash/chips, curry with rice and naan bread. By replacing one of these carbohydrate portions with something else like a green vegetable or salad you will reduce the amount of sugar consumed significantly.



- Pie & Mash
- Rice & Naan
- Battered Fish & Chips



- Green vegetables
- Cucumber and yoghurt
- Salad

05

Reduce and replace other carbs

Meals don't have to include a portion of potatoes/rice/pasta and nobody actually needs bread to survive. Why not try substituting rice or pasta for strips of cabbage or finely cut broccoli or cauliflower. Having a salad for lunch instead of a sandwich would reduce your sugar intake significantly, as long as it's not a potato or pasta salad!



- Rice
- Pasta
- Bread
- Potatoes



- Green vegetables
- Meat/Fish
- Salad
- Low carb products