



## **An Introduction to Diabetes**

Diabetes is a term used to describe a cluster of conditions in which the body is unable to produce any or enough effective insulin. This is a hormone needed for glucose to enter the cells to be converted to energy.

Glucose is the fuel that your body needs. In your diet, this comes from foods such as fruit, milk, some vegetables, starchy foods and sugar. To help control your blood glucose you will need to eat healthy foods and be active. You may also need to take pills and/or insulin.

### **There are two main types of diabetes**

#### **Type 1:**

Commonly diagnosed in children and adolescents, this occurs when the pancreas is unable to produce insulin.

#### **Type 2:**

Usually developed in adulthood, this occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin and when the body does not effectively use the insulin that is produced.

### **Other Instructions:**

## Healthy Eating Tips for Diabetes

1. Eat three meals each day, including breakfast.
2. Try not to skip meals.
3. Space meals 4 to 6 hours apart.
4. Breakfast, lunch and supper should be about the same size.
5. Avoid very large or very small meals.
6. Have one piece of fresh fruit at each meal.
7. Limit juice to 1/2 cup per day.
8. Limit your intake to high fat foods, including deep fried or fried foods.
9. Limit meat portions to the size of the palm of your hand and choose fish or skinless poultry more often.
10. Be careful of added fats. Choose low fat or fat free dressings or spreads.

**Eat Right Ontario: 1-877-510-5102**

## Space on the Plate Meal Plan

Half of a standard dinner plate should contain at least two kinds of vegetables.

Of the remaining half, one quarter should contain starches such as potato, rice or pasta. The other quarter should contain protein, such as fish, lean meat, chicken, beans or lentils.

Also, be sure to have a beverage like milk and a piece of fresh fruit.

## Handy Portion Guide

Your hands can be very useful in estimating appropriate portions. When planning a meal, use the following portion sizes as a guide:

A serving size of peanut butter or cheese would be the size of two thumbs.

A thumb-tip equals a teaspoon. Three thumb-tips equal a tablespoon, about the amount of milk you would put in coffee.

The palm of your hand equals a serving of meat, fish or poultry. This is about three ounces.

A fist equals a cup. This would be the size of a serving of grains and starches.

## Additional Instructions

Ask your nurse if a referral to a diabetes program has been made for you.

For general diabetes-related concerns prior to accessing a diabetes program, speak to your Health Care Provider or contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.