

## Patient information

# Hospital menu guidance for patients with diabetes needing additional nutrition

West Suffolk Hospital menus aim to provide patients with a choice of foods. The hospital caters for a wide range of dietary needs. If you have any questions, please ask nursing staff to speak to the Catering department or a dietitian.

### Diabetes and diet

If you have diabetes, the amounts and types of food that you eat will affect your blood glucose levels. Your blood glucose levels will have an effect on your overall health as well as specific things like your body's ability to fight infection and heal wounds.

You may have been advised on what blood glucose levels to aim for. Being unwell can affect blood glucose levels so the levels we are aiming for in hospital may be different from when you are well.

### The need for extra nutrition

You may need extra nourishment from your food if you are not eating very much, if you are losing weight without meaning to or if you have particular medical conditions. The enriched menu offers foods that contain higher levels of nutrients.

**Be sure to tick the 'enriched' box at the top of the menu.** If you are not sure whether you need the enriched menu or not, please ask your nurse.

### Getting the balance right

In order for you to be as well as possible, it is important that you get the right nutrition and that you have good blood glucose control. We do not want to focus on

one of these and ignore the other.

If you do need additional nutrition, we do not want to restrict your diet but eating very erratically can put you at risk of high and low blood glucose levels, which can be damaging to your body and dangerous.

To help get the balance right, it is important to try and eat consistently:

- See below for more information on carbohydrate.
- Avoid going for long periods without carbohydrate food. Even if you don't feel well enough to eat a meal, there are carbohydrate drinks and snacks that you can have.
- Avoid eating a lot of carbohydrate all in one go. A 'little and often' approach is usually best.

Eating more food or more nutritious food may cause your blood glucose levels to go up. If it is important for you to have this extra nutrition (see above section on the need for extra nutrition) then your diabetes medication may need to go up, to keep control of your blood glucose levels. Your doctor or diabetes specialist nurse is the person who would make that decision. Make sure you are clear on your diabetes medication doses when the time comes for you to go home.

## **Carbohydrate**

Carbohydrate foods are the ones that work with insulin to give you energy (whether it is insulin made by your body or injected). When carbohydrate, insulin and energy are not in balance then your blood glucose levels will be too high or too low and your body will not function properly.

**To help your body, aim to eat a similar amount of carbohydrate at each meal.**

You can choose as many types of carbohydrate as you like, as long as the total amount stays roughly the same.

If you do not think you can eat any carbohydrate food at a meal time, ask a nurse for cups of whole milk or to be referred to the dietitians.

Carbohydrate foods include starches and sugars. On the hospital menus, these are:

| Breakfast  | Savoury   | Sweet   |  | Drinks              |
|--|---|---|--|---------------------|
| Bread<br>Cereal<br>Fruit (all types)<br>Fruit juice<br>Milk<br>Porridge<br>Yoghurt | Bread<br>Crackers<br>Pasta<br>Pastry (pies, quiche)<br>Potato<br>Rice | Biscuits<br>Cakes<br>Crumble<br>Custard<br>Enriched jelly<br>Fruit<br>Gateau<br>Ice cream | Mousse<br>Pies<br>Rice<br>Pudding<br>Semolina<br>Sponge<br>Whip<br>Yoghurt | Fruit juice<br>Milk |

## In future

If you still need extra nutrition when the time comes for you to be discharged from hospital, you can get advice on how to do this at home from the dietitians. If you are eating well enough, you may not need to continue with the extra nutrition once you are home. If you are not sure, please ask your ward doctor or nurse.

**Help!** Some people have other dietary needs too; if you are finding it difficult to combine all the different dietary advice, please ask nursing staff to refer you to the dietitians.

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email [info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk](mailto:info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk). This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>

