

Patient information

Hospital menu guidance for patients with diabetes

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

When 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. Uncontrolled blood glucose levels may affect your hospital stay therefore it is important to achieve acceptable control during your admission.

You may have been advised on what blood glucose levels to aim for. Being unwell can affect blood glucose levels so the levels we consider acceptable when you are in hospital are 4 - 11mmol/l.

Having diabetes doesn't stop the healthy eating messages applying to you, the same as they do to everyone else!

Getting the balance right – healthy eating

Eating healthily involves more than just getting blood glucose control. A healthy diet will be:

- Low in saturated fat, for a healthy heart
- High in fibre, for a healthy bowel, this will help keep you feeling full and lower the glycaemic index.

- Sensible on calories to avoid any unnecessary weight gain. Carrying too much weight can prevent your insulin working properly (insulin made by your body or injected) as well as having other effects on your health.

The menu has a 'healthy options' code of a heart ♥ against some menu items. If you choose items with this code, these choices are either lower in fat, salt, sugar, or higher in fibre. They may also be a low glycaemic food (Low GI) or contain oily fish/omega-3 oils. Please tick the healthy options box if you are trying to follow a healthier diet and you will be sent sugar-free jelly and diet yoghurts if you order these, helping to keep your blood glucose/sugars under control.

You are not obliged to choose items coded with a heart at every meal and you do not have to choose every item at a meal which is coded with a heart.

Whether or not a food contains carbohydrate has no link to whether the food is healthy in other ways. For more information on a healthy diet, ask to see a dietitian or go to www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthy-eating or for loads of really practical tips and ideas for when you go home, go to www.nhs.uk/change4life

Getting the balance right – carbohydrates (carbs)

Carbohydrate is an essential nutrient which provides energy to your body, in the form of glucose. If you eat more carbs than your insulin (insulin made by your body or injected) can cope with, then your blood glucose levels will go high. If you do not eat enough carbs your blood glucose levels may go low.

For this reason:

- It is essential to have some carbs at each hospital meal (3 meals per day). You do not have to choose a food item from every section of the menu, ie you do not necessarily need potatoes and bread, or cereal and bread.
 - Missing out on carbs at a meal time can cause problems for your diabetes medication
- If there is a risk of hypoglycaemia (blood glucose levels below 4mmol/l) you may be advised to have carb snacks between your meals.
 - If there is no risk of hypoglycaemia, you may not need extra snacks
- It is important to know what your blood glucose levels are. In hospital you will be having your levels checked regularly by finger-prick.

- If your blood glucose levels are generally too high, you may need to eat less carbs or take more diabetes medication.
- If your blood glucose levels are generally too low, you may need to eat more carbs or take less diabetes medication.
- If your blood glucose levels are sometimes high and sometimes low, you need to keep your carb-portions similar at each meal

Remember: Your blood glucose level will go up or down depending on the total amount of carbs you eat so eating lots of lower-carb foods will have the same effect as eating a little of high-carb food.

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

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

Important note on sugar

Sugar and starch are both types of carbohydrate and both will affect your blood glucose levels – the more of them you eat, the higher your blood glucose levels will go. Sugar can taste nice but nutritionally, it only gives the body energy and has no other benefits. Starchy foods, on the other hand, can provide other nutrients such as vitamins. To control your blood glucose levels, you will need to be consistent with the amount of carbs you eat. It is usually better to get your carbohydrate from starchy foods, but to enjoy a varied diet you can include some sugar as long as your total carb intake (starch + sugar = total carb intake) stays the same as usual.

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. 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>



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