



Executive Chef Paul Marks shares recipes and cooking tips with members.

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE
Type II Diabetics Need to Watch the Clock

As the last installment of my reprinted diabetes series, I've decided to focus on the inescapable reality of time, and how keeping track of it is crucial to living with diabetes.

With Type II diabetes, the timing of meals, snacks, sugar and starch is extremely important to maintain blood-sugar levels. Try not to let yourself get too hungry. This can trigger a feeding frenzy, or you will just eat more than you should at that time. It is best to take your meals in smaller amounts and have

healthy snacks in between. This helps regulate your blood sugar more than eating one or two large meals a day. In addition, eating breakfast will help start the day off right by stabilizing your blood-sugar level.

It is very important to distribute your calorie intake throughout the day, as this helps maintain proper levels of glucose if you are taking medication.

Try to consume meals and snacks at the same time every day. Even if your blood-glucose level is higher than normal, do not skip a meal or a snack. Skipping meals will lead to large swings in blood-glucose levels. Space your meals four to five hours apart and leave two hours between meals and snacks. This will help you maintain your blood-sugar levels.

There is sometimes a misconception that diabetics need special foods to maintain their blood-sugar levels. To my knowledge, this is not true. Eating foods in moderation and just eating healthy foods will be good for you. Special foods, such as sugar-free jams, jellies and muffins, are not diabetic foods. But they do help with cravings for sugar and carbs. Here is a tip I received when talking with a person who is diabetic and also loves chocolate. Unable to find a chocolate substitute or dessert that satisfies her craving, she buys the highest-quality dark chocolate bar she can find, and has one small piece. The quality of the chocolate, the lower-sugar level and the dark chocolate taste, satisfy her cravings without guilt.

The number of calories you should be eating depends on your weight, size, activity level and age. Your doctor or a dietitian can help you determine what your calorie intake should be. In children with Type II diabetes, it is extremely important that they eat the proper number of calories so they will grow and be healthy. In adults, calorie intake can be less, but do not deprive yourself of calories. Calories are what fuels the body and mind. Do not try to control your blood-sugar levels by limiting your calorie intake. It is extremely important that you adjust your insulin level, by medication, to cover the calorie intake.

What about wine? Yes, it is okay to have an occasional drink while being a diabetic. But first discuss

this with your doctor, for each person's diet plan is different. If you do drink, do not exceed more than two drinks for males and one drink for females at any given time. But what is considered a drink? A cocktail made with hard alcohol is 1.5 ounces per serving. Try to mix your hard liquor with a nonsweetened mixer like soda water, carbonated water or a diet soda. Drinking vodka mixed with orange juice is a double whammy because the sugar in the fruit juice mixed with the alcohol will affect your blood-sugar level. A serving of beer is 12 ounces. Since beer is chock-full of carbs, try to pick a light beer and/or a low-carb beer—this will help with your blood-sugar level. A serving of wine is four ounces. Because a standard pour in a restaurant is six ounces, ask your server for a half-glass or a short pour. This is also called a two-finger pour. Just explain you are diabetic and a bartender should oblige. Stick with dry white or red wines. They have fewer residual sugars and a lower-sugar content. Alcohol is metabolized as a fat, so if you are tracking your fat intake, a drink is counted as two fat exchanges. Remember, the most important part is moderation, and in that spirit, here is a delicious diabetes-friendly recipe:

No-Sugar Oatmeal Cookies
Makes about 48 cookies

- 1/2 cup margarine at room temperature
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 6 teaspoons Splenda®
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup quick-cooking oatmeal
- 1/2 cup chopped almonds
- 1/2 cup raisins, coarsely ground (important step in recipe, do not skip)

Blend first four ingredients. Mix next eight ingredients together and blend into the wet ingredients. Add in nuts and coarsely ground raisins. Mix thoroughly. Drop by teaspoon onto lightly greased baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes.

Carbs: 20 grams per four cookies