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Elect **Kevin WALLACE**

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Kevin is a Charter Bellevue Club Member

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

DIABETES PART TWO: HOW TO EAT

This is the second, and possibly most important, column in my series on diabetes that first appeared several years ago.

A healthy eating plan is an excellent strategy for controlling or maintaining diabetes. Eating healthy helps in the overall intake of calories because you fill up on healthy foods, control your appetite with foods that stay with you and metabolize food more slowly.

Carbohydrates

Of all food categories, carbs have the greatest effect on blood-glucose levels. The body turns carbs into glucose, which makes the blood sugar rise. This does not mean that you have to avoid all carbs; some carbs in your diet are healthy. Whole-grain foods and fruit are healthy carbohydrate choices, as they provide the body with fiber, vitamins and other nutrients. Candy and soda are basically empty carbs—while they may not be wasted on your palate, they are definitely wasted on the body.

Carb Tips

If you are going to drink soda, make it diet. A 12-ounce can of full-sugar soda contains approximately 140 calories and 45 carbs, all empty calories.

Watch your fruit juice intake. This is another item that is loaded with sugar with very little benefit. Eat a piece of fruit instead to get all the nutrients, vitamins and fiber.

Use sugar substitutes in place of regular table sugar, including honey, syrup, jam and jelly. Non-sugar sweetener has no nutritional value and can be used liberally. One tablespoon of sugar or sweetener, including jams and jelly, has approximately 15 carbs. If you are watching your carb intake, note that

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1 tablespoon of sweetener is equal to a slice of bread, a piece of fruit or a cup of milk. All are far healthier and more filling to the body.

Breakfast is the meal that can most dramatically raise blood-sugar levels. Avoid dry cereal, fruit and milk at this meal, period. Some of the best breakfast choices are toast, English muffins without jelly, egg substitute or fat-free cottage cheese. This would be the time to take in some whole grains that will stay with you a long time. Try cooking some wheat berries or barley and adding a sugar substitute as a sweetener, along with some nuts.

This makes a very filling breakfast. Both grains can be cooked in a rice cooker. Good-old oatmeal is always a wonderful breakfast food.

Do not eat more than 1 cup of cooked rice or 1½ cups of pasta at a meal. The body turns both of these into sugar. When eating rice, try brown rice. White rice has been stripped of all nutrients. For pasta try whole-wheat pasta or other whole-grain pasta.

I have found I much prefer the bite and texture of the whole-grain pastas; they are meatier and seem to be more satisfying.

Limit fruit intake to two or three servings per day. A serving of fruit is a small apple or orange, or 1 cup of sliced fruit. Fruit has a high-sugar content, so the best time to eat fruit is when you are the most active, such as just before a walk in the afternoon or a workout.

Fiber

This is extremely important in anyone's diet, and especially crucial in a diabetic's diet. Most Americans do not get enough fiber and most doctors concur that diabetics should take in more fiber than a person without diabetes. Fiber helps you feel full, curbing your appetite for those empty calorie snacks. Fiber also helps the digestive system, keeping it working properly. Eating a lot of fiber can even help slow the body's absorption of sugar. If you are going to eat a sugar-based food, either make sure it has a lot of fiber or eat it with a high-fiber food.

Fiber Tips

Beans, lentils and split peas are a great source of fiber with very little fat and high levels of protein. Pair these great substitutes with a dinner that you would normally eat rice with. If you order a burrito in a Mexican restaurant then ask for all beans and no rice, and also request a low-carb tortilla.

This is becoming the rage in fast food. They are higher in fiber and lower in net carbs, with about three carbs per six-inch tortilla.

Whenever possible, choose foods that are constructed around whole grains and bran. Try to eat four servings of this a day. A serving size is one slice of whole-grain bread or a half-cup of pasta, potatoes, brown rice, beans or lentils. A half-cup of cooked pasta may not seem like a lot but it can be beefed up with vegetables for more bulk. Try sautéing garlic in olive oil, toss in zucchini and carrots cut into matchsticks, sauté lightly, add a handful of cherry tomatoes, season with salt and pepper, add a little vegetable stock and toss with a half-cup of pasta and 1 tablespoon of grated Parmesan cheese.

Eat greener, preferably dark green and orange vegetables; they contain more nutrients and fiber. Spinach packs more nutritional punch per serving than any other vegetable.

Eat fresh fruit, preferably whole fruit, and eat the skin when possible. Most of the nutrients are in the skin or just under it. Cook vegetables al dente so they maintain their crispness and reduce the amount of nutrients and fiber that is cooked out. Raw vegetables have the most nutrients and keep you feeling full for a longer time.

Fats

Reducing the amount of fat the body takes in helps with weight control and serum lipid levels. Both affect and influence diabetes. The body needs some fat, so choose wisely.



Fat Tips

Extra-virgin olive oil is one of the most flavorful oils out there. A little goes a long way, drizzled over veggies or on a salad with a little lemon. Olive oil is a nontrans fat, and is easy to absorb by the body with many health benefits.

Try doing a vegetable stir-fry using extra-virgin olive oil. Another good fat is extra-virgin coconut oil, again a nontrans fat, and you need only a small amount. Try to limit your oil and fat intake to 1 or 2 tablespoons per day.

Avoid deep-fried foods. These were never meant to be meals. Fish and chips and french fries started out as street food and snack food. Use lowfat cooking methods, such as roasting, broiling, steaming, poaching or baking. I keep extra-virgin olive oil in a mister at home in the kitchen.

Rather than pouring oil into the pan and heating it up, heat the pan first, spray the pan, then add your ingredients. If sticking occurs, either add a little more oil or liquid. This method cuts out a lot of oil used in cooking.

Nonfat dairy products, nonfat salad dressings and mayonnaise, and butter substitutes are another great way to cut down on fat intake.

Select lowfat cuts of meat and chicken. Stay away from heavy marbling in meat and dark chicken meat.

In my next column, I will talk about meal timing, carb and food distribution throughout the day and alcohol do's and don'ts.