



Healthy eating

What do we mean by healthy eating for residents with diabetes?

- » Residents with diabetes should eat the same healthy food as other residents. They do not need a special diet. Residents with diabetes can eat desserts and some sugar
- » Losing weight when you are older can do more harm than good. Weight loss can lead to muscle loss, weakness and falls
- » Carbohydrates provide energy and are also an important source of fibre, vitamins and minerals
- » The amount of carbohydrate in the food eaten by a resident has the greatest effect on their blood glucose levels:
 - too much carbohydrate can cause blood glucose levels to rise
 - too little carbohydrate may cause blood glucose levels to drop.
- » Restricting carbohydrate foods may have other effects in frail, older people, such as malnutrition
- » A balance of nutrient-rich carbohydrates throughout the day is an important component of healthy eating for residents with diabetes

Avoiding hypo and hyperglycaemia

! If a resident has not eaten all their meal, encourage them to have some carbohydrates from a different source (for example milk shake, toast or bread, fruit juice, custard or dessert)

- » Know which residents are at risk of hypo (low blood glucose) e.g. they are on insulin or a sulphonylurea. Notify the RN if these residents do not finish or skip a meal
- » Do not inject mealtime insulin (including premixed insulin) until the resident's food is available. These insulins must be given no more than 15 minutes before eating
- » Ensure residents with diabetes have access to healthy carbohydrate snacks outside the normal mealtime routine to prevent potential hypos
- » Increased hunger in residents with diabetes can be a sign of hypoglycaemia

Carbohydrates can be found in:



Next steps

Read:

- Diabetes management in aged care: a practical handbook – chapter 13: Healthy eating