



November 17th, 2014

Wise Diet Choices for Diabetics

Diabetics with a sweet tooth often turn to artificial sweeteners to provide the taste they crave. It could be argued that they do nothing to retrain the taste buds, but now research is showing that they paradoxically lead to an increase in blood glucose! Further testing demonstrated that microbes in the gastric tract were responsible for the change, although the exact mechanism was unclear. Either way, it's another reason to avoid "sweet."

What is the Best Diet?

The debate shifts between low-carb and low-fat diets, but for diabetics, it appears that a combination of low-carb AND low-saturated fat is the ideal diet. An Australian study has suggested that a diet emphasizing protein and unsaturated fats, while restricting carbohydrates (14% carb calories, 28% protein and 58% mono/unsaturated fat vs. the commonly accepted ratio of 50-20-30) significantly improved glycemic control and reduced cardiovascular events.

Best Protein Choices

The best sources of protein for diabetics (and most others, for that matter) include fish, dairy and plant proteins. Animal proteins (meats), which tend to be associated with saturated fats, have been implicated in a variety of chronic conditions, such as heart disease, but now they have been associated with a higher risk of Type 2 Diabetes. The effect is more pronounced in women. Choose your protein wisely!

Exercise is Important Too

As with so many other chronic conditions, exercise can be the key to avoiding deadly complications. And, it may never be too late to start! Diabetics who don't regularly exercise are at a 70% greater risk of cardiovascular death than those who exercise at least three times weekly. A Swedish doctor looking at these results noted that this underscores the importance of including exercise as an integral part of any diabetes management plan.

Diabetes is a complicated condition intimately associated with metabolism. As such, the interplay between diet and exercise is key to its management. Your pharmacists can help you identify some ways to improve your control.