

Quick Guide: Diet Approaches for Type 2 Diabetes Your Dietitian Offers

1 Mediterranean Diet

Emphasises plant-based wholefoods including:

- Healthy fats: olive oil, nuts and seeds, oily fish, avocados.
- Fibre: wholegrains, fruits and vegetables.
- Plant proteins: beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas.
- Moderate seafood and poultry.
- Limited processed foods.



Pros:

- Rich in foods that have a low glycaemic index, meaning they cause slower, steadier increases in blood sugar levels, improving blood sugar control.
- Encourages weight loss and improved insulin sensitivity.

Cons:

- Cost: fresh fish, nuts and olive oil can be expensive. Try frozen or canned products as an affordable alternative.
- Time: preparing meals from scratch can take time, so try batch cooking and saving leftovers.

3 Low Carbohydrate Diet

- Reduces carbohydrate intake and emphasises proteins and healthy fats.
- Involves eating fewer than 130g carbohydrate per day (1 slice of bread = 20g carbs). Different levels of restriction are possible, e.g. 80-100g carbs per day.

Pros:

- Helps stabilise blood sugar levels, improve insulin sensitivity and encourage weight loss.
- More achievable than a ketogenic diet for many.

Cons:

- May not be suitable for people taking blood glucose-lowering medication due to the risk of hypos (low blood sugars). Discuss with your GP, diabetes team or dietitian first!
- Can cause constipation in some people. Your dietitian can help with improving your fluid and fibre intake to prevent this.

2 DASH Diet (for Hypertension)

Emphasises foods rich in blood-pressure lowering potassium, calcium and magnesium including:

- Fruits and vegetables.
- Wholegrains.
- Lean protein (poultry, fish, beans, nuts).
- Low fat dairy.
- Limited salt and processed foods.



Pros:

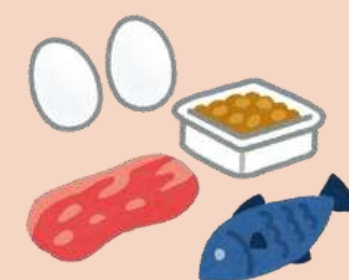
- Helps improve blood sugar control by emphasizing high fibre, low glycaemic-index foods.
- Supports weight loss and reduction in high blood pressure.

Cons:

- Requires use of food labels and measurement of serving sizes. Your dietitian can support with this.

4 Ketogenic Diet

- Very low carbohydrate (<50g/day)
- High in fats, moderate protein
- Emphasises foods like meat, fish, eggs, dairy, nuts, seeds, and non-starchy vegetables.



- Not generally recommended for people taking blood glucose-lowering medications due to the risk of hypos and diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA)
- The NHS Type 2 Diabetes Path to Remission Programme uses soups and shakes as part of a short-term ketogenic diet under close clinical supervision. Speak to your GP, Dietitian or diabetes team to find out whether you are eligible.

For detailed/personalised advice, book with your PCN Dietitian.

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5 Intermittent Fasting

Several approaches including:

- 5:2 diet - 5 days of regular eating, 2 days of reduced calories (about 500-600 calories per day) on non-consecutive days.
- Alternate Day Fasting - alternating between regular eating days and very low calorie days.
- 24-hour fasts - fasting for 24 hours once or twice per week
- Modified fasting - very low calorie intake on fasting days rather than complete fasting

These can be combined with other dietary approaches.

Pros:

- Can reduce calorie intake, improve blood sugar control and cellular health as well as promoting weight loss.
- Fasting periods can be varied to allow more flexibility.

Cons:

- Important to maintain good nutrition on eating days to prevent nutritional deficiencies.
- Not suitable for everyone (e.g. pregnancy, certain medical conditions or medications that must be taken with food).
- There is limited evidence about the long-term impact of intermittent fasting in type 2 diabetes.
- Some experience hunger and irritability on fasting days.

6 Time Restricted Eating



A type of intermittent fasting. Involves limiting food intake to a specific window of time each day, usually 6-12 hours. For example, fasting for 18 hours from and eating within a 6 hour window.

Pros:

- Recent research suggests that fasting for 16-18 hours may lower blood sugar and aid short-term weight loss.
- Some individuals with type 2 diabetes have achieved remission with time-restricted eating fasting, but more studies are needed to confirm long-term benefits.

Cons:

- Risk of hunger and over-eating during non-fasting windows.
- Not suitable for everyone (e.g. people prescribed medications that must be taken with food) .

Other lifestyle considerations

Whichever dietary approach you choose, it's important to consider other aspects of your lifestyle to help manage your type 2 diabetes.

- Sleep: Ensure you get 7-9 hours of sleep per night.
- Stress Management: Practice mindfulness, meditation, or other stress-reducing activities that you or your family enjoy.
- Hydration: Staying hydrated is crucial. Aim for 8 glasses of water a day.
- Limit alcohol: Aim to drink no more than 14 units/week. Spread this out in the week and include alcohol-free days.
- Regular Exercise: Incorporate both aerobic and strength-training exercises.



Making changes safely



Losing weight or making significant changes to your diet can alter your insulin sensitivity and your dose requirements for blood glucose or blood pressure medications. Make sure that you discuss your options with your Dietitian and attend your medication and diabetes reviews.

Your dietitian can help you to find the right approach for YOU and provide practical, personalised advice. To get started, book an appointment with your PCN Dietitian.