

These nutritional guidelines have been put together by Registered Dietitians from Centrepont to provide information for staff and volunteers at food banks and food aid providers. They are evidence-based, affordable, and can be used to support beneficiaries to receive a nutritionally balanced parcel of food which takes individual needs such as health conditions, culture and kitchen facilities into account.



Nutrition and health

Diabetes is a long-term condition characterised by high levels of sugar (glucose) in the blood. It develops when insulin-specific cells do not produce enough insulin, or when the body does not react as it should to the insulin produced. Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes have different causes, but for both conditions a healthy diet is key to keep blood sugar levels under control, and to reduce risk of developing other conditions such as heart disease.

When digested, some foods which are high in carbohydrates increase blood glucose levels faster than others. These are known as high Glycaemic Index (GI) foods and include sugary drinks, fruit yogurts, fruit juice, sugar, jam, sweets, sugary cereal, white bread, white rice, white pasta and potatoes. This rapid increase of glucose in the blood can be hard to manage for people with diabetes. Low GI foods such as wholegrains, lentils, beans, fruit and vegetables are all rich in fibre, which helps to slow down the digestion and release of glucose into the blood.

Fat is also important to consider as eating lots of saturated fat increases blood cholesterol and enhances the risk of stroke and heart disease. Dietary examples include butter, cream, coconut oil, palm oil, pastries and biscuits. Sources of unsaturated fat like olive oil, seeds and nuts help protect your heart. Dairy products can be high in saturated fat, so choosing low-fat dairy is recommended. Healthy protein sources like chicken, fish, soya and pulses are preferable to red and processed meat, which can be high in fat and salt. Too much salt can cause high blood pressure which increases risk of heart disease and stroke, so where possible include lower salt options.

The following questions may be useful to ask the beneficiary, if you have the ability to further tailor their parcel:

- Would you like to have a parcel tailored for diabetes? *If no you can provide a standard parcel*
- Are there any foods that you don't like or don't eat?
- What cooking facilities and equipment you have available in your kitchen? *E.g. Tin opener, oven, fridge, hob, microwave, kettle*
- Do you have any other dietary requirements that you would like to be considered? *See other guidelines for more information*
- Would you like some diabetes-friendly recipe cards to go with ingredients in the parcel? *see next page for options*

The following long life food items would all be healthy options for someone with diabetes, try to include some from each group:

- Carbohydrate-rich foods:
- Whole grains (brown or basmati rice, oats, buckwheat, bulgur, quinoa, brown pasta, barley)
 - Wholegrain crackers/bread products
 - Wholegrain / lower sugar cereal e.g. Weetabix, bran flakes
 - Chickpea (gram) flour, wholewheat flour, spelt flour
 - Microwave wholegrains

- Protein-rich foods:
- Tinned fish (mackerel, sardines, tuna)
 - Nuts (unsalted) and nut butter
 - Tinned beans (e.g. chickpeas)
 - Dried lentils/split peas
 - Low-sugar baked beans
 - Low sugar protein bars/shakes
 - Tofu (long-life)

- Dairy and alternatives:
- Skimmed or semi-skimmed milk
 - Unsweetened alternative milk options (e.g. almond, oat, soya)
 - Milk powder
 - Soya desserts

- Fruits and vegetables:
- Tinned fruit in water or juice (not in syrup)
 - Tinned vegetables in water
 - Tinned tomatoes
 - Tinned soups (vegetable, lentil)
 - Tomato paste/puree
 - Plantain chips

Other items to include:
 Olive, vegetable or rapeseed oil. Spices and herbs if available. Tomato-based pasta or curry sauces. Tea or coffee, artificial sweeteners over sugar, sugar-free squash over fruit juice or fizzy drinks. If including a packet of biscuits, consider lower sugar options such as plain digestives, rich tea light or nice biscuits.

If you have access to fresh or frozen food you could also add:
 Any fresh/frozen fruit and vegetables, potatoes, sweet potato, yam, cassava and plantain, low-fat dairy products, fish, lean meat, wholegrain bread and eggs.

- An example 3 day parcel could include:**
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| • 1 pack of porridge | • 1 pasta or curry sauce |
| • 1 pack of brown pasta | • 2 tins of beans/pulses |
| • 1 pack of wholegrain crackers or lower sugar biscuits | • 2 tins of fish |
| • 1 pack of microwave wholegrains | • 1 pot of nut butter |
| • 2 tins of fruit in juice | • 1 carton of skimmed or dairy-free milk |
| • 2 tins of vegetables | • 1 pack of soya desserts |
| • 1 tin of soup | • Olive oil (small) |
| • 1 tin of tomatoes | • Herbs/spices |
| | • Pack of tea or coffee |

- The following Recipe Cards are diabetes-friendly:**
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|--------------------------|-------------------|
| • Vegetarian Bean Chilli | • Overnight Oats |
| • Lentil Dhal Curry | • Tuna Bean Salad |
| • Cupboard Lentil Soup | • Black Bean soup |
| • Breakfast Yoghurt Pot | |

For more information on the condition go to
<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/food-and-diabetes>
<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/diabetes-type-2.html>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/type-2-diabetes/food-and-keeping-active/>