

# **Nutritional Management Of Patients With Diabetes**

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Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is the hormone needed to help process the sugars and starches (carbohydrates) into energy for our body. It is also necessary for our body to use protein and fat from our diet. The two most common types of diabetes are classified as Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is an inherited autoimmune disorder and accounts for five to ten percent of diabetes. With this type of diabetes the pancreatic beta cells are damaged or destroyed and the body can no longer produce life essential insulin. The individual with Type 1 diabetes must take insulin shots to stay alive. Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 to 95% of diabetes. This type of diabetes occurs when the body cannot make enough insulin or properly use the insulin it produces. Type 2 diabetes can be managed with medical nutrition therapy, oral glucose-lowering agents and insulin, either alone or in combination. Achieving near normal or normal blood glucose levels in patients requires a comprehensive education in self-management including medical nutrition therapy. Medical nutrition therapy involves first a comprehensive nutrition assessment evaluating metabolic, nutrition, and lifestyle components. Goals are then set with the individual, which are practical, achievable and addressing metabolic control needs. Nutrition intervention should be tailored around and individuals' cognitive, emotional, physical, social and cultural needs. Developing an individualized meal plan based on the clients' lifestyle is instrumental in achieving positive outcomes. Methods for nutrition guidelines are numerous ranging from very basic methods of intervention to more in-depth methods. For individuals with Type 1 diabetes the interrelationship between food, exercise and insulin is an important component of medical nutrition therapy. Consistency in timing and amount of carbohydrate eaten day to day is the basics of nutrition and should match the person's preferred eating pattern. The primary medical nutrition therapy goals for individuals with Type 2 diabetes are to achieve and maintain glucose, lipid and blood pressure goals. Caloric restriction, reduction of total fat and increased physical activity to produce weight loss, as small as 10 to 20 lbs can improve glycemic levels. The individual's medical nutrition therapy plan should be evaluated and updated routinely to assess how the goals have been accomplished and to determine future self-management skills.