

Live Life By Choice!

Healthful food choices for diabetics that are good and good for you! Medical school taught me about many diseases and how to treat them. Diabetes was one of them. I tried to think of its treatment as a formula. The “treatment formula” for diabetes. The formula would include a “healthy diet”, lifestyle changes and medication regimes. Medication, of course, would be the last resort. Uncontrolled Diabetes can have horrible complications and I want to ensure that my patients would be able to avoid them.

I studied and read article after article. Most of the articles would suggest a healthy diet, but they never elaborated on what a “healthy diet” actually entailed. The hospital menus included foods that were unkind to diabetics. I couldn’t understand why certain foods were even included on the menu. As a result, I had a hard time describing a healthy diet for my patients mostly because it wasn’t clear to me. How do I tell them where to start when I don’t know myself.

That’s when I decided to learn more about foods and the properties they possess. Hours have been spent in ongoing research in an effort to discover what a “healthy diet” is and how to develop it. I found some remarkable answers.

Humans eat food for two reasons. The first reason is energy production though most people would say they eat to satisfy hunger. Eating actually does both by satisfying hunger it leads to the production of energy. Energy is produced when the foods we eat in the form of proteins, carbohydrates and fats are broken down into usable forms for utilization by the cells of the body.

The second reason people eat food is for pleasure. People eat food because it makes them feel good. It satisfies emotional and physical needs. There is nothing wrong with thoroughly enjoying your food. The problem is that many diabetics believe the two are exclusive instead of inclusive. As a result, food choices are often high in fat, low in fiber and high in sugar.

It is unfortunate that the process of breaking down these food choices and using them for fuel is inefficient in diabetics. As a result, glucose levels are usually not adequately controlled and they will eventually require medication intervention. Unfortunately, this often comes at a high price due to the many side effects of the said medications that often yield suboptimal results. In some instances this may be unavoidable and medications become necessary.

Let’s face it, sugar and fat are the most delicious foods on earth. I mean just think about ice cream. We want the creamiest, sweetest ice cream because it provides more pleasure than low fat ice cream. Can you imagine a high fiber ice cream? What about ice cream with no sweetener? I agree, that doesn’t even sound good.

Can a healthy diet provide energy and also provide pleasure? What is the treatment formula? Can we actually have a “healthy diet”? Is that even possible?

Well, as it stands, it is possible. It is possible to have your proverbial cake and eat it too. As long we understand a few simple rules, food can again be both healthy and pleasurable.

Here are a few simple dietary guidelines to Live Life By Choice. I have listed my own lists of “Fabulous 5s”, the five foods to avoid, five foods to enjoy, and five foods that enhance.

Avoid 5

1. White flour, white rice and white sugar
2. High fructose corn syrup (read your ketchup and barbecue sauce labels carefully)
3. Saturated fat (an exception is coconut oil and even then, use sparingly)
4. Artificial sweeteners (saccharin, aspartame, sucralose)
5. Refined foods

Enjoy 5

1. Whole fruits and vegetables
2. Brown rice and whole grains (some exceptions may apply)
3. Xylitol (a natural sugar with a low glycemic index)
4. Legumes
5. Nuts

These lists are my no means exhaustive, but are a foundation for developing your very own health formula. Highly energetic and pleasurable meals can be developed by incorporating these principles. Here are some herbs to include.

Enhance 5

1. Garlic and onions
2. Holy basil
3. Ginseng
4. Cinnamon
5. Bitter melon

Adding the preceding items not only add flavor, but each one has a positive effect on diabetes. The best part is that none of these herbs add any measurable calories, but add an immeasurable amount of flavor. Try sautéing and adding them into various meals for both energy and pleasure. Live life by choice!

For ideas and recipes, check out www.drhelenps.com.

These writings are not intended to replace the sound advice of your physician. Instead, it is used for educational purposes to maximize nutrition and minimize disease and their complications.