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Diabetic Nutrition Patient Education:

Why is it important to eat a healthy diet?

It's important to eat a healthy diet because eating the right foods can keep you healthy now and later in life. It can lower the risk of problems like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and some types of cancer. It can also help you live longer and improve your quality of life.

How can I plan my meals with diabetes?

First, make sure that you know how many carbs you should be eating each day. Ask your doctor or dietitian if you are not sure. While eating a low-carb diet, it's important to make sure that you are getting enough of the nutrients your body needs. Some kinds of proteins and fats are better for your health than others. The same is true for foods with carbs. Meat and fish have very few carbs in them. Fats also have very few carbs in them. However, it is important to make healthy choices for fats and proteins:

- Choose "healthy" fats – These are also called "monounsaturated" or "polyunsaturated" fats. They tend to be more liquid at room temperature. Healthy fats are found in things like olive oil, canola oil, and sesame oil. They are also found in nuts, seeds, avocados, and nut butters.
- Choose lean meats, poultry, seafood, and proteins – Eat fish, chicken, pork, and beef. Eggs, seeds, nuts and nut butters, and cheese are also healthy choices.
- Eat non-starchy, colorful vegetables like lettuce, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, and cabbage. Fruits like watermelon, peaches, and berries are also lower in carbs. Choose whole grains because they provide fiber.
- Follow your doctor's instructions for how and when to check your blood sugar. This can help you learn how certain foods affect your blood sugar.
- Keep track of your meals and blood sugar levels. Show this to your doctor or nurse so they can adjust your treatment if needed. If you take insulin, you will also need to keep track of your exercise patterns and how much insulin you give yourself with each dose.
- If you take insulin, make sure that you understand how to use it. This includes knowing how to adjust the dose based on your blood sugar level and what you plan to eat. Foods that have a lot of protein or fat also can affect your blood sugar level. Some people need to adjust their insulin doses when they eat these foods.
- Remember that other things besides carbs can raise or lower your blood sugar level. These things can include exercise, getting sick, drinking alcohol, traveling, and stress. If you take insulin, make sure that you know how and when to adjust your dose in these situations.

If you are having trouble counting carbs or managing your blood sugar, talk to your doctor. A dietitian can also help you plan specific menus that will give you the right amount of carbs each day.

To schedule an appointment please call 1-888-296-GPHA (4742)