



## DIABETES PREVENTION

# HEALTHY DIET.

A balanced diet is important to stay healthy and prevent illnesses. Getting nutritional advice can help you find the diet that is right for you.

### WHICH FOODS ARE PARTICULARLY HEALTHY?

- › Fruit and vegetables in particular are associated with a reduced risk of heart disease and stroke. They may also help prevent certain types of cancer. If possible, eat fruit and vegetables (either raw or cooked depending on what you prefer) with every meal and as snacks in between. If you don't have access to fresh produce, you can opt for frozen foods. Experts recommend eating at least two portions of fruit and three portions of vegetables per day.
- › Foods high in dietary fibre also help prevent heart disease and stroke, and have a positive impact on blood sugar in prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. Plenty of dietary fibre can be found in vegetables, salads, fruit, pulses, nuts, and whole grain cereals. The nutrition information tables on food products provide information on how much fibre they contain. Experts recommend consuming 20 to 35 grams of fibre every day.
- › Some recommend a diet based on Mediterranean cuisine. This consists mainly of fruit, vegetables, whole grain products and olive oil, some fish and poultry, and sometimes red meat.

### WHAT TYPES OF FOOD SHOULD YOU AVOID OR CUT DOWN ON?

Eating a healthy diet means avoiding or cutting back on some types of food. These include:

#### FATS

There are different types of fats. Some of them are better for you than others. "Trans fats" are particularly unhealthy. These can be found in margarine, many fast food products and some supermarket baked goods. Trans fats can raise cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease. Foods that contain trans fats should be avoided whenever possible. On the other hand, the polyunsaturated fats found in fish are considered to be good for the body, and can reduce the risk of heart disease. Polyunsaturated fats from other food sources also appear to be good for us. In the past, the general opinion was that saturated fats were bad for your health. However, more recent studies indicate that the risk of heart disease is not increased simply by consuming saturated fats. Whenever possible, healthy oils (such as olive oil or rapeseed oil) should be used for cooking.

#### SUGAR

Eating a healthy diet means cutting back on or completely avoiding refined sugar, fructose, sweets, and cereals with a low extraction rate. Cereals with a low extraction rate can be found in white bread, white rice, white pasta, and ready meals. Whole grain products such as whole grain bread or brown rice contain more fibre and are better for

your health. You should also avoid sweetened drinks such as iced tea, lemonades, or cola.

### RED MEAT

Studies have shown that eating red meat can lead to an increased risk of certain health problems, including heart disease and cancer. A vegetarian or vegan diet is possible provided enough protein and calcium are consumed from alternative sources.

### HOW MANY CALORIES DO I NEED PER DAY?

How many calories you need depends on your weight, age, and gender, as well as how many calories you burn at work and in your leisure time. Your doctor or a nutritionist can tell you how many calories you should consume per day. If you want to lose weight and keep it off, you should stay below the specified calorie level in the long term rather than going on a crash diet. You can also burn more calories through physical exercise. The best way to achieve this is by gradually changing your diet and integrating a little more exercise into your daily routine.

**Losing 5%-10% of your body weight can help prevent or significantly delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.**

### WHAT ABOUT ALCOHOL?

People who consume a small amount of red wine every day seem to have a reduced risk of heart disease. Alcohol can cause other illnesses, however. The risk of liver disease and certain forms of cancer can rise. Alcohol also has a negative impact on fat and blood sugar levels in individuals who are overweight or suffer from prediabetes or type 2 diabetes.

### WHO SHOULD I TURN TO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about nutrition you should contact your doctor or a nutritionist. The diet that is right for you also depends to some extent on the state of your health and any complaints you may suffer from. Depending on your questions or goals, it may be worthwhile to consult a professional nutritional advice service or go on a specific programme. As a SWICA customer, you can also contact the nutritionists at santé24 if you require further assistance.

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