

Disordered Eating and Diabetes

What about you?

Do you try to keep your weight below the recommended range for your height?

- Yes
- No

Have you binged at least twice a week for the past three months?

- Yes
- No

Do you often make yourself vomit, use laxatives or diuretics, exercise or skip insulin injections to keep your weight down?

- Yes
- No

If yes, describe what you do.

Why learn about disordered eating?

- It may be difficult to control your weight when you are trying to keep your blood glucose under tight control.
- Skipping insulin and meals may seem like a good way to keep your weight down, but it isn't.
- If you try to avoid all sugar, you may feel deprived and end up bingeing on sweet foods.
- You can learn to control your diabetes and weight using food, insulin or diabetes medicine and exercise.

What causes disordered eating?

- Eating disorders usually have several causes. More women than men have eating disorders.
- Being thin is IN. Successful people in magazines, movies and advertisements are almost always thin.
- It's easy to believe that problems in families and relationships or at work will go away if you are thin.
- If you are a perfectionist, have a chaotic life or are afraid of growing up, what you eat can seem like the one thing you can control.

Diabetes and disordered eating

- Because you are focused on the foods you eat, you may have more eating problems than people without diabetes.
- Insulin injections sometimes cause weight gain. Too much insulin may make you hungry and cause low blood glucose and the need for increased food intake. If it is not burned for energy, it is stored as fat.
- You may not know that once in a while it's OK to switch foods or drinks made with sugar for other foods in your food plan. If you deprive yourself of all sugars, sweets or favorite foods, you are more likely to binge.
- If you have an eating disorder, you are more likely to have problems with high or low blood glucose and get eye, heart, or kidney disease and other complications caused by poor blood glucose control.

What to do

- Discuss your eating habits with us. You may need to see an eating disorders specialist who knows about diabetes. It is very difficult to change without professional help.
- Ask us to help you set realistic and healthy weight and blood glucose goals.
- Ask us or your dietitian how you can enjoy your favorite foods as part of your meal plan so you don't feel you are missing out.
- Choose low-fat foods to avoid gaining weight.
- Keep honest records of what you eat every day. List any time you binge, vomit, use laxatives, skip insulin or meals or exercise a lot, and note how you feel.
- Be prepared for slip-ups. Acknowledge, accept, forgive yourself; learn, and move on, but don't give up.

Tips for binge eaters

- Work with your dietitian to come up with a food plan that works for you. Plan snacks for those times when you are tempted to binge.
- Make a list of things you could do instead of bingeing, such as calling a friend, listening to relaxing music, watching TV or taking a shower or bath.
- Keep "free" or "low-calorie" foods (low in sugar, fat and calories) on hand for times when the urge to eat is overwhelming. See some suggestions below.
- Work on one thing at a time. If you are dealing with painful emotional issues, binge on low-calorie foods rather than trying to quit bingeing at the same time. You can work on your eating behavior later.
- You may want to see a mental health professional to talk about why you are binge eating and help learn new eating behaviors. Ask us for a referral.

Tips for undereaters

- Your dietitian can tell you how many calories you need and help you work out a food plan based on the types of foods you like. Knowing what, when and how much to eat can help you keep your diabetes and weight under control and stay healthy.
- Gradually add 200 to 250 calories a day until you reach your target weight.
- You may need to see a mental health professional to talk about why you are underweight and help learn new eating behaviors.

Suggested free and low-calorie foods

Free foods

- Vegetables
- sugar-free gelatin dessert
- sugar-free ice cream
- sugar-free gum
- broth
- diet soda or soft drinks
- tea
- coffee

Low-calorie foods

- 200 ml sugar-free hot chocolate
- ½ cup reduced-fat pudding
- 1 cup raw vegetables
- 3 cups air-popped or low-fat popcorn
- 30 gm fat-free cheese
- 1 cup tossed salad

Set your sights

A realistic target weight for me is _____ kg.

A realistic target range for my blood glucose is _____ to _____ mg/dl.

When I feel tempted to binge, something I could do instead is:

If I eat, I will choose a low-calorie food, such as:

Keep track

Situation

Food eaten

Amount

Blood glucose level after 2 hours _____ mg/dl

How I felt:

Here's the challenge; what's the solution

Your blood glucose has been high for a couple of weeks and your doctor tells you to use more insulin. You are worried that you will gain weight. What can you do?

Your diabetes is under control but you have gained two kg. in the past few months. Someone tells you that you could lose the weight easily by skipping a few insulin injections. What will you do?
