Type 2 Diabetes or non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM), is a condition related to how your body processes sugar. Normally, insulin controls how your body gets energy from food. It causes your cells to open so that sugar in the blood can enter the cells and be used for energy.

Type 2 Diabetes comes from insulin resistance- when the cells stop responding to insulin. At first, the pancreas makes more insulin to push the cells, but over time, the pancreas stops being able produce it.

This results in more sugar staying in the blood, and sometimes the body needs outside insulin supplies.

When too much sugar is in your blood, it can damage your body. If not properly controlled, diabetes can over time:
- Make you feel tired and have difficulty concentrating,
- Harm blood vessels in the eyes, causing vision loss,
- Lead to foot infections, ulcers which may require amputation,
- Cause arteries to harden, raising the risk of heart attack/stroke.

Fortunately, you can make changes to help control or prevent type 2 diabetes.

Your choices can help you control your blood sugar! Healthy Food Choices:

1. Focus on foods that are natural and whole. Avoid processed products (like chips, cookies, crackers) with unfamiliar ingredients- especially ones that contain added sugar.

2. When you eat, try to include something from each food group: protein (beans, lentils, tofu, eggs, fish, chicken), fat (avocados, nuts like almonds and walnuts, seeds, olive oil) and carbs (non-starchy vegetables, root vegetables, whole grains).

3. Try to make half of your plate low-sugar, non-starchy vegetables: cucumbers, nopales, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, squash, mixed salad, etc. Reduce your consumption of vegetables high in sugar and starch like carrots and white potatoes.
4. Reduce your consumption of bread, rice, tortillas, and white potatoes.
At your meal try for just 1-2 corn tortillas OR ½ cup brown rice OR 1 steamed sweet potato (best option). Choose whole grains over white flour products.

5. Eat beans regularly - black, kidney, pinto, garbanzo, lentils- all kinds!

6. Eat only small amounts of fruit- best when combined with nuts or other foods; choose blueberries and other berries, apples, and pears. Avoid bananas, mangos, and other tropical fruits (they are in high sugar).

7. Bring snacks when you leave home! Cucumbers, celery with avocado and lemon. Carrots and hummus. Raw almonds or walnuts with apples, pear or berries.

8. Avoid sugar and all added sweeteners (artificial and natural);
You can use cinnamon or stevia as a sugar substitute!

9. Avoid soda and juice; drink more water- aim for 8 cups/day.

10. Avoid excess dairy (cut down milk, cheese, sour cream, sweetened yogurt.) Replace sour cream with small amounts of plain yogurt.

11. Cook using low heat. Damp is best: steaming or boiling for short periods of time. Cook with olive oil on low heat or coconut oil and avoid corn and other vegetable oils and margarine.

12. Increase your physical activity! Set aside time for aerobic exercise (walking, running, biking, soccer, swimming, zumba, etc.) for at least 45 minutes, 5 times a week. Also try to include stretching and strengthening exercises (like push-ups, weights) in your routine.

13. Try to sleep at least 8 hours each night and take short naps as needed.

14. Take your medication regularly as prescribed by your doctor.

15. Find out from your doctor how often your blood sugar level needs to be checked and be sure to test it regularly.

16. Try to decrease or stop alcohol consumption and quit smoking.
Seek help at a clinic or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

17. Visit our nutritionist/herbalist for further information and natural remedies to support your diabetes care.

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