

# Lifestyle Prescriptions

# Patient Education Resource

## How To Use This Resource

This toolkit is a collection of action-oriented **patient education resource** to help GPs and Primary Care Network (PCN) care teams address patient's questions and serve bite-sized health advice to them.

It is designed to support the Health Promotion Board's Lifestyle Prescriptions for the management of Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension and Lipid Disorders.

There are two ways to use this toolkit. You can either:

- [Navigate by Subtopic](#) to locate the subtopic/s that best address patient's needs.
- [Navigate by Purpose](#) to locate a specific health advice relating to nutrition and healthy eating, and physical activity respectively.

# Navigate by subtopic

Lifestyle Domain	Subtopic/brief description
<a href="#">Nutrition &amp; Healthy Eating</a>	<p><a href="#">Carbohydrates (Carbs)</a> – clarify issues regarding amount, type and timing of carbs intake</p> <p><a href="#">Carbohydrates (Carbs) &amp; diabetes</a> – clarify issues regarding carbs and blood glucose</p> <p><a href="#">Fat and cholesterol</a>– explain different types of fat and tips on how to lower blood lipids</p> <p><a href="#">Salt</a> – explain why excess salt intake is bad for health and tips on how to lower salt intake</p> <p><a href="#">Food labelling</a> – explain how to read and use food labels to make healthier choices</p>
<a href="#">Physical activity</a>	<p><a href="#">Physical activity</a> – clarify issues regarding amount, type and frequency of physical activity</p> <p><a href="#">Physical activity &amp; Diabetes, Hypertension and Lipid Disorders (DHL)</a> – clarify issues regarding physical activity and DHLs</p>

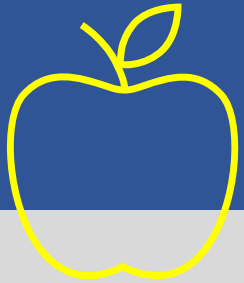


If your purpose is to ...	We recommend you try these tools. Right click on each tool to bring you directly to the page.	
Explain health risks and benefits of change	<a href="#">Carbs are bad for diabetes.</a> <a href="#">Eating sugar causes diabetes.</a> <a href="#">Eating fat causes weight gain.</a> <a href="#">A low salt (sodium) diet can help lower BP.</a> <a href="#">Eating fish is good for persons with lipid disorders.</a>	
Address beliefs or knowledge gaps that might be barriers to change	<b>Beliefs/gaps regarding over-eating:</b> <a href="#">As long as the food is healthy I can eat it without any restriction</a> <a href="#">Persons on insulin must eat more carbs.</a> <a href="#">Since I'm on diabetes medication, I can eat all I want.</a> <a href="#">I can eat as much sweets as I want when I've hypoglycaemia.</a> <a href="#">It's ok to eat a lot of salt as excess salt gets passed out in the urine.</a> <a href="#">Since I'm on cholesterol lowering medications, I can eat all I want.</a> <a href="#">I worked out today so I can eat without any restriction.</a>	<b>Beliefs/gaps regarding forbidden foods or loss of taste:</b> <a href="#">Fruits are bad for diabetes.</a> <a href="#">All cholesterol is bad.</a> <a href="#">All fat is bad.</a> <a href="#">Too much salt masks the true flavours of food.</a>
Prepare patient to take action	<b>Self-efficacy:</b> <a href="#">You must aim high when setting health goals.</a> <a href="#">It is hard to find lower sodium products and meals.</a> <a href="#">There's not much I can do to lower my blood cholesterol.</a> <b>Medication compliance:</b> <a href="#">I can manage my cholesterol with diet and exercise alone.</a>	
Help patient take action	<b>Quantity and Quality:</b> <a href="#">All carbs are bad.</a> <a href="#">All starchy foods are bad for diabetes</a> <a href="#">People with diabetes should not eat starchy vegetables</a> <a href="#">Wholegrains are good for diabetes.</a> <a href="#">Protein is better than carbs for diabetes.</a> <a href="#">Trans-fat should be avoided as much as possible.</a> <a href="#">I should avoid all cholesterol-containing foods.</a> <a href="#">Eating eggs will make my cholesterol levels go up.</a> <a href="#">Our dietary salt intake comes mainly from table salt.</a> <a href="#">Gourmet salts such as sea salt are lower in sodium content.</a> <a href="#">Lower sodium salts are safe for most people when taken in moderation.</a>	<b>Timing:</b> <a href="#">Eat carbs last.</a> <a href="#">It is unhealthy to snack after dinner.</a> <a href="#">It is good to snack just before you sleep.</a> <a href="#">Eating regular meals is good for diabetes.</a> <b>Alternatives:</b> <a href="#">Artificial sweeteners are helpful for diabetes.</a> <a href="#">Special "diabetic" foods are the best choices.</a> <a href="#">It is okay to swap solid food with a meal replacement</a> <b>Food labels:</b> <a href="#">HCS compares packaged foods across different categories.</a> <a href="#">Both HCS and Nutri-Grade mark are the same.</a> <a href="#">Which drink would you choose?</a>



## Navigate by purpose

If your purpose is to ...	We recommend you try these tools. Right click on each tool to bring you directly to the page.
Explain health risks and benefits of change	<a href="#">Exercise makes it easier to manage your diabetes.</a> <a href="#">Exercise benefits persons with lipid disorders.</a>
Address beliefs or knowledge gaps that might be barriers to change	<b>Beliefs/gaps regarding need:</b> <a href="#">Someone who is thin is physically fit.</a> <a href="#">One is too old to exercise.</a> <a href="#">You don't need to exercise if you're taking medications for high blood pressure.</a>  <b>Beliefs/gaps regarding safety:</b> <a href="#">I should not exercise because I could fall and hurt myself.</a> <a href="#">It is dangerous to exercise if you've high blood pressure.</a>
Prepare patient to take action	<a href="#">Since my blood glucose is well controlled, I don't have to plan before exercising.</a> <a href="#">People don't meet their activity goals because they lack will-power.</a>
Help patient take action	<b>Quantity and Quality:</b> <a href="#">Doing an intensive workout once a week is enough to control high blood pressure.</a> <a href="#">You've to exercise a lot if you want to lower BP.</a> <a href="#">You have to go to the gym to exercise.</a> <a href="#">You don't need the gym to manage your diabetes.</a> <a href="#">Running is a better exercise than walking.</a>  <b>Timing:</b> <a href="#">It is good to have an activity around meal-time.</a>



# Nutrition & Healthy Eating

*Take small steps to make big changes.*

As long as the food is  
healthy I can eat it  
without any restriction.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**Eating too much healthy food** can cause weight gain due to caloric excesses and may in some cases, have negative effects on health.

For example, drinking a glass of juice which might contain several fruits can cause blood glucose to spike due to a greater amount of sugar.

Therefore, it is important to eat a wide variety of foods in the right amounts to meet your daily nutritional needs.

To do this, use **My Healthy Plate**:

- ✓ Fill **Quarter** plate with **wholegrains** *e.g. brown rice, multigrain bread, rolled oats*
- ✓ Fill **Quarter** plate with good sources of **protein** *e.g. chicken breast, fish, tofu, legumes, lean meat*
- ✓ Fill **Half** plate with **vegetables** *e.g. leafy greens, mushrooms, eggplant*
- ✓ Complete your meal with **1 serving fruit** *e.g. 1 medium apple, 1 handful of blue berries, 1 wedge of papaya*



**Adults aged 50 and above should eat sufficient protein and calcium-rich foods to strengthen and maintain muscles and bones.**

How much do you know about ...

# Carbohydrates (Carbs)



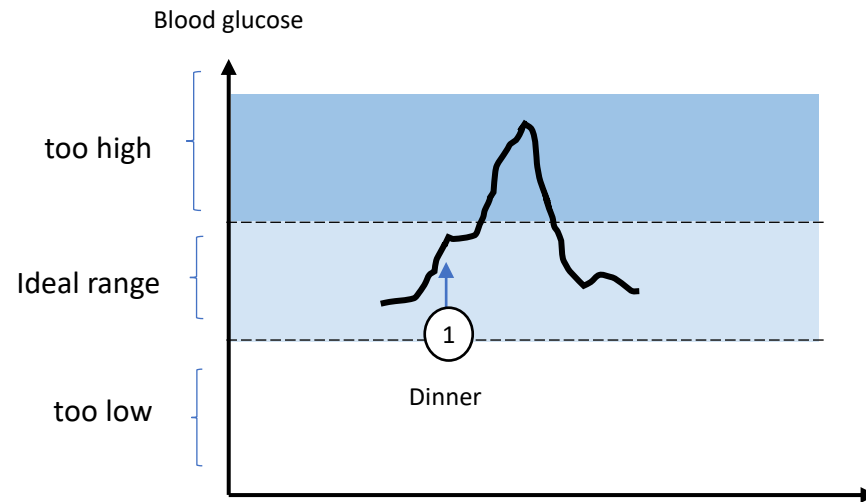
All carbs are bad.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

## Carbohydrates (carbs) are our main source of energy.

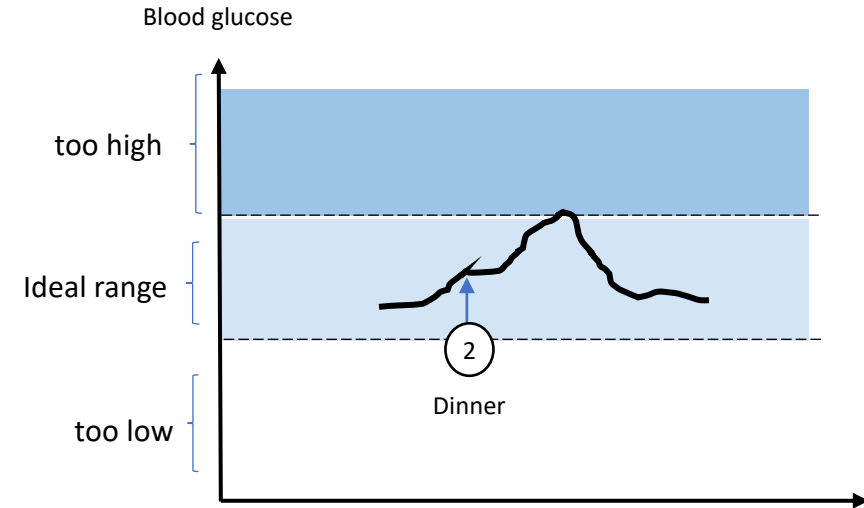
- Choose carbs with plenty of vitamins and minerals, and raise blood glucose slowly or slightly (i.e. foods with low Glycaemic Index).
- Eat a carb meal with a side dish of lean protein and vegetables to slow down blood glucose elevation.



1



1 plate Char Kway Teow  
with a **few bean sprouts**,  
1 can regular **soft drink**



2



1 plate fried olive **brown rice** with **chicken and mixed vegetables**,  
1 cup **unsweetened green tea**

## TIPS

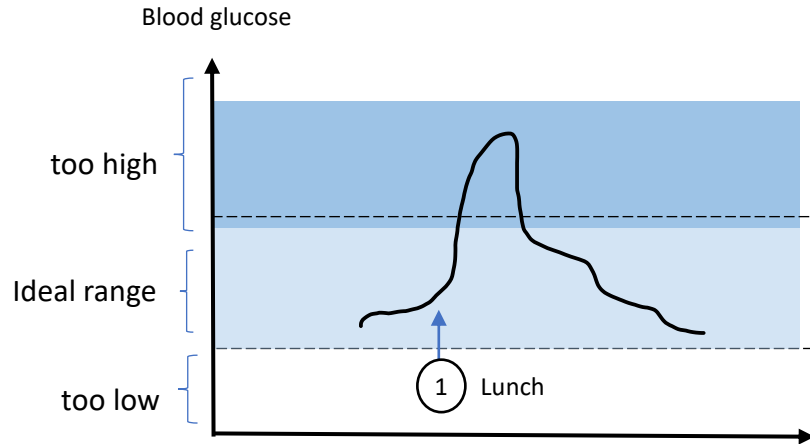
- ✓ Replace high carb meal with one that has wholegrains, lean protein and fibre
- ✓ Reduce total amount of carbs in a meal
- ✓ Avoid high carb (esp. refined carb) snacks/drinks around meal time

Eat carbs last.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **TRUE**

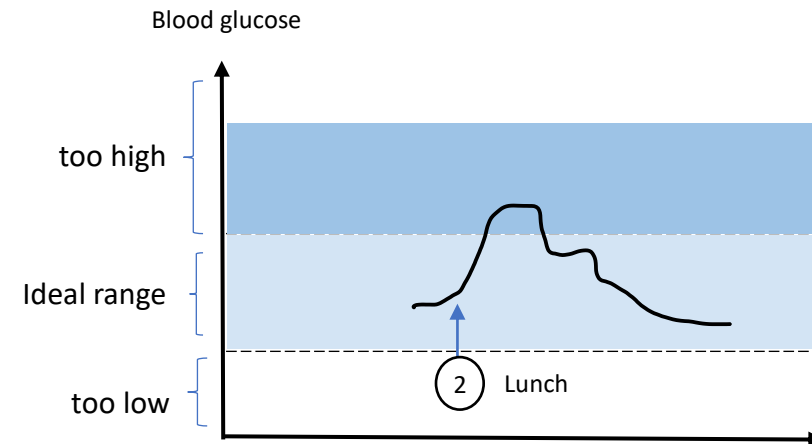
The order in which carbohydrates (carbs), fats and protein are eaten may affect blood glucose pattern. When we eat protein and vegetables first and carbs last, we tend to feel full sooner and are less likely to overeat the starchy carbs. At the same time, the healthy fat in the protein slows down carb digestion and prevent post-meal glucose spikes.



1



Eat a plate of crab meat fried rice with shredded vegetables.



2



Eat mixed vegs first, followed by protein (e.g. grilled chicken).  
**Eat brown rice last.**

## TIPS

Eat/drink this first	Before eating this
egg or cheese or tuna or low-fat milk	toast, pastry or bun
meat/fish or vegetable dish	rice, noodles or bee hoon
handful of nuts or 1 tbsp nut butter	toast, cereal, oatmeal
plain yoghurt	fruit

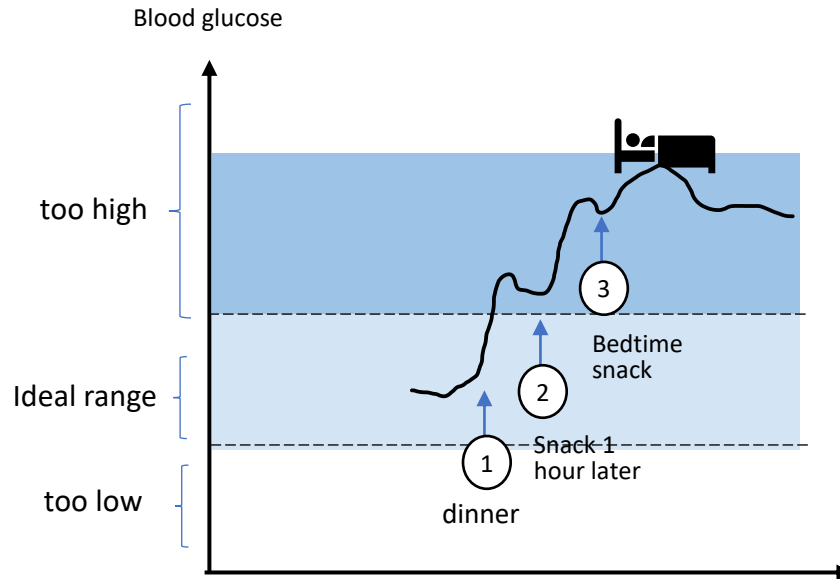
Return to ['Navigate by purpose'](#)

It is unhealthy to snack  
after dinner.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **DEPENDS**

At night, the body does not burn food as fast. Eating high-carbohydrate (carb) snacks, especially refined carbs, after dinner causes blood glucose to **“stack”** and stay high for most parts of the night. This puts stress on the pancreas and increases your risk of diabetes.



1



1 bowl braised chicken bee hoon in sweet black soya sauce, 1 glass water

2



1 chocolate doughnut, 2 pcs candy, 1 can of soft drink

3



1 fruit tart, 1 cup hot kopi-O with sugar

Nevertheless there are some people who are able to have a snack after dinner without affecting their health. If you must have an occasional after-dinner snack:

TIPS

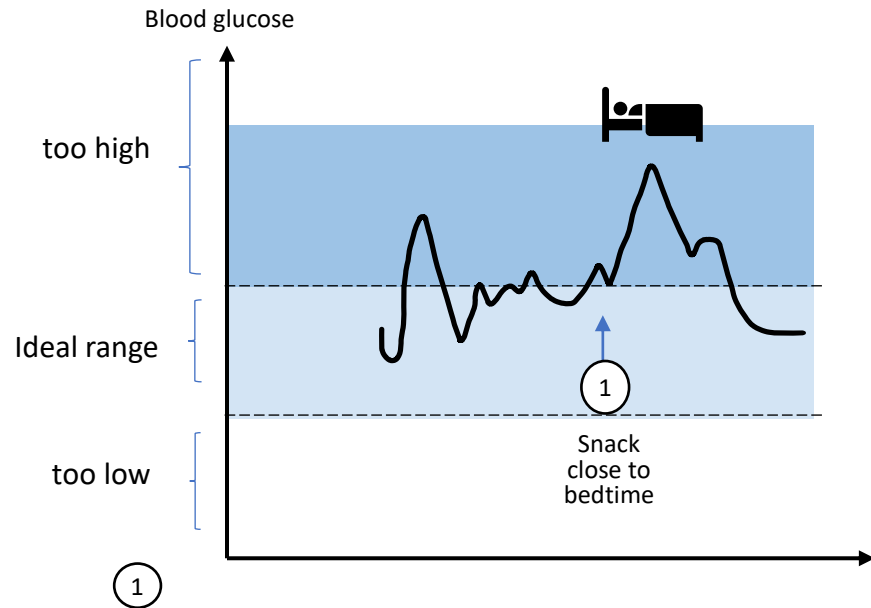
- ✓ Choose a healthier snack with fibre, protein and/or low fat (e.g. slice of fruit, handful of nuts)
- ✓ Control snack portion (e.g. eat 1 slice of fruit, portion snacks in a small cup)
- ✓ Manage emotional snacking (e.g. go for a walk, distract yourself)
- ✓ Eat enough vegetables and lean protein at dinner to reduce your urge to snack

It is good to snack just  
before you sleep.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **DEPENDS**

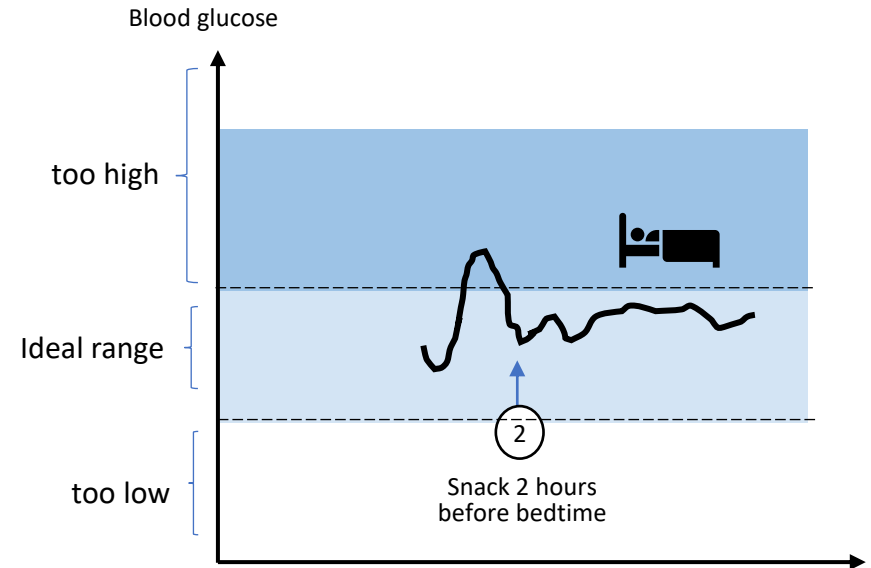
Whilst it is not recommended to snack just before you sleep due to slower metabolism at night, there are people who need or are able to have a bedtime snack without affecting their health.



①



1 kueh,  
1 mug of tea  
sweetened with  
condensed milk



②



1 cup plain low-  
fat yoghurt with  
a handful of nuts

If you must have an occasional bedtime snack:

**TIPS**

- ✓ Eat snack at least 2 hours before bedtime.
- ✓ Avoid high carb snacks/drinks or have them less often
- ✓ Choose a healthier snack that has protein and low fat (e.g. 1 or 2 wholegrain cracker with tuna or peanut butter)

Return to ['Navigate by purpose'](#)



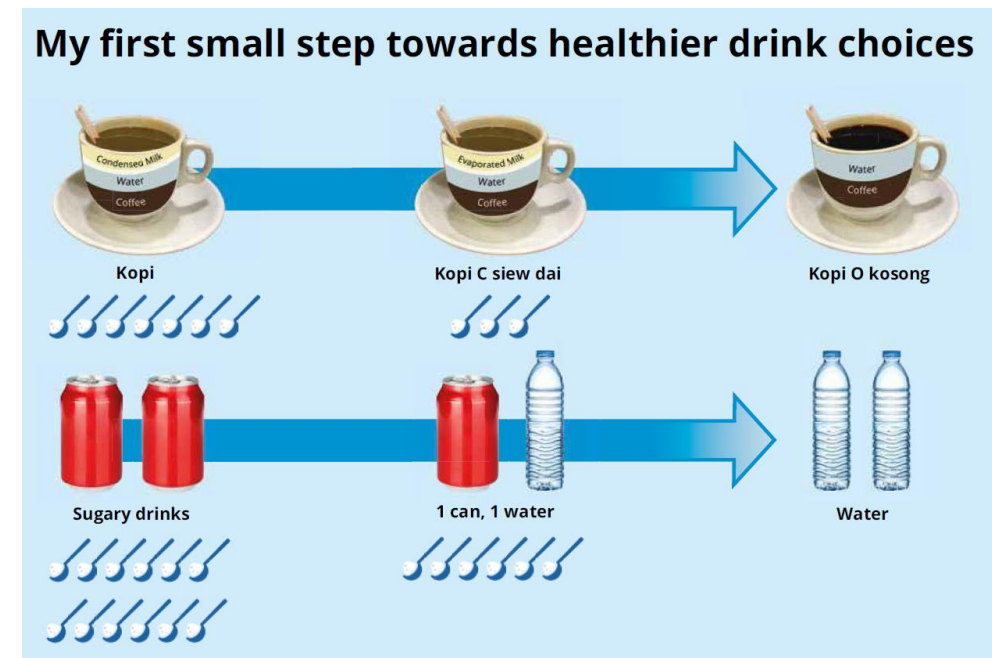
You must aim high when  
setting health goals.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

If we set the bar too high, it will only discourage us if we do not make progress. Setting small but realistic goals helps us focus our efforts on what is actually achievable.

Below are examples of taking small steps, one at a time:



*These images were adapted from the National Diabetes Reference Materials*

How much do you know about ...

# Carbohydrates (Carbs) & diabetes

\*For patients with diabetes and/or on insulin, use judgement when recommending carbs intake.

Eating sugar causes  
diabetes.

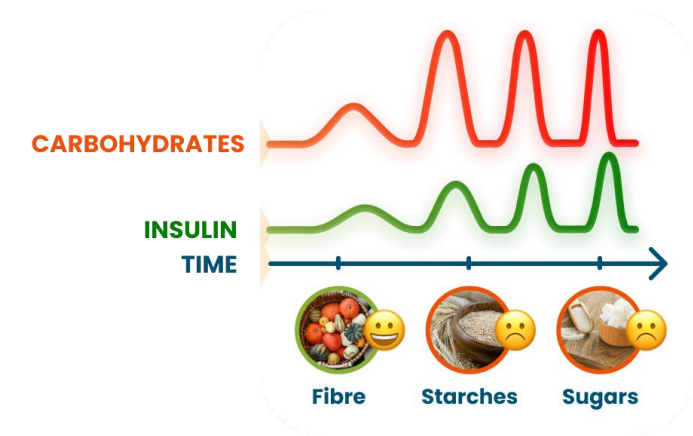
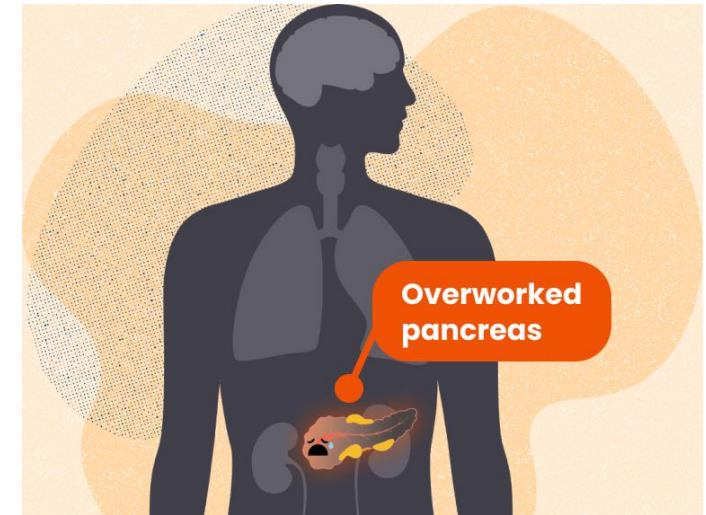
**True or False?**

# Answer: **DEPENDS**

**High sugar intake alone** does not cause diabetes.

But frequent intake of sugar and refined carbohydrates overworks your pancreas, and contributes to weight gain and obesity, which are risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

Other risk factors include sedentary lifestyle, older age, high blood pressure and genetics.



*These images were adapted from the National Diabetes Reference Materials*

Carbs are bad for  
diabetes.

**True or False?**



Answer: **FALSE**

**Everyone needs carbohydrates (carbs),** including people with diabetes.

Carb is an important part of a healthy diet. It provides the fuel you need to get through the day.

Use **My Healthy Plate** to eat a variety of nutritious foods in the right amounts to keep your blood glucose levels under control.

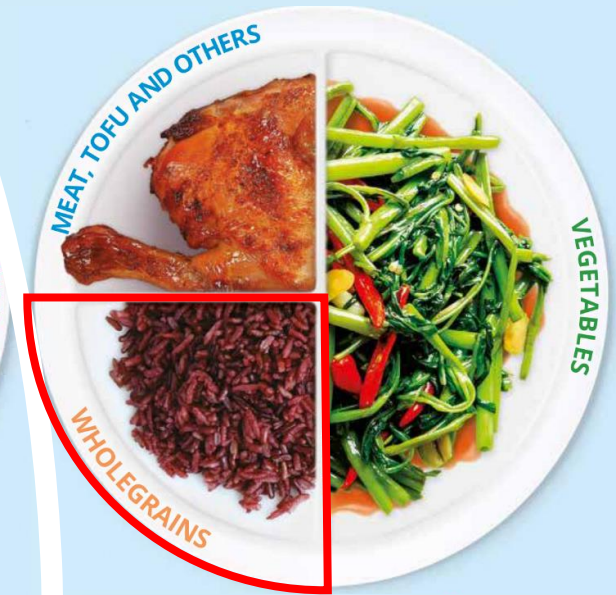
Refer to examples of My Healthy Plate on the right.

Return to ['Navigate by purpose'](#)

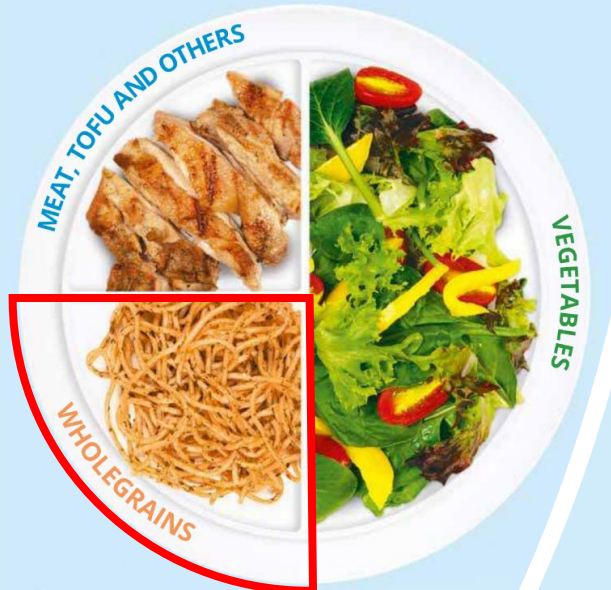
**Chinese**



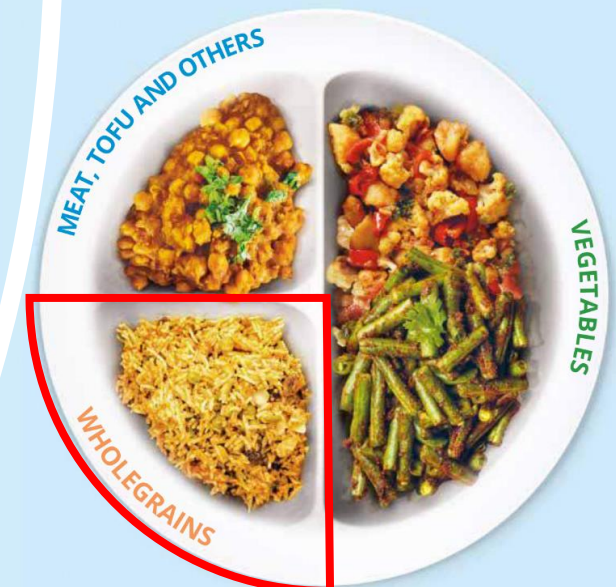
**Malay**



**Western**



**Indian**



*These images were adapted from the National Diabetes Reference Materials*

All starchy foods are bad  
for diabetes.

**True or False?**



# Answer:

# FALSE

**Starchy foods** contain carbohydrates (carbs).

Besides rice, bread, bee hoon, and pasta, starchy foods also include starchy vegetables such as corn, beans and lentils.

While starchy vegetables do contain carbs, they are high in fibre and rich in vitamins and minerals.

If you're using My Healthy Plate, starchy foods should make up about one-quarter of your plate.



People with diabetes  
should not eat  
starchy vegetables.

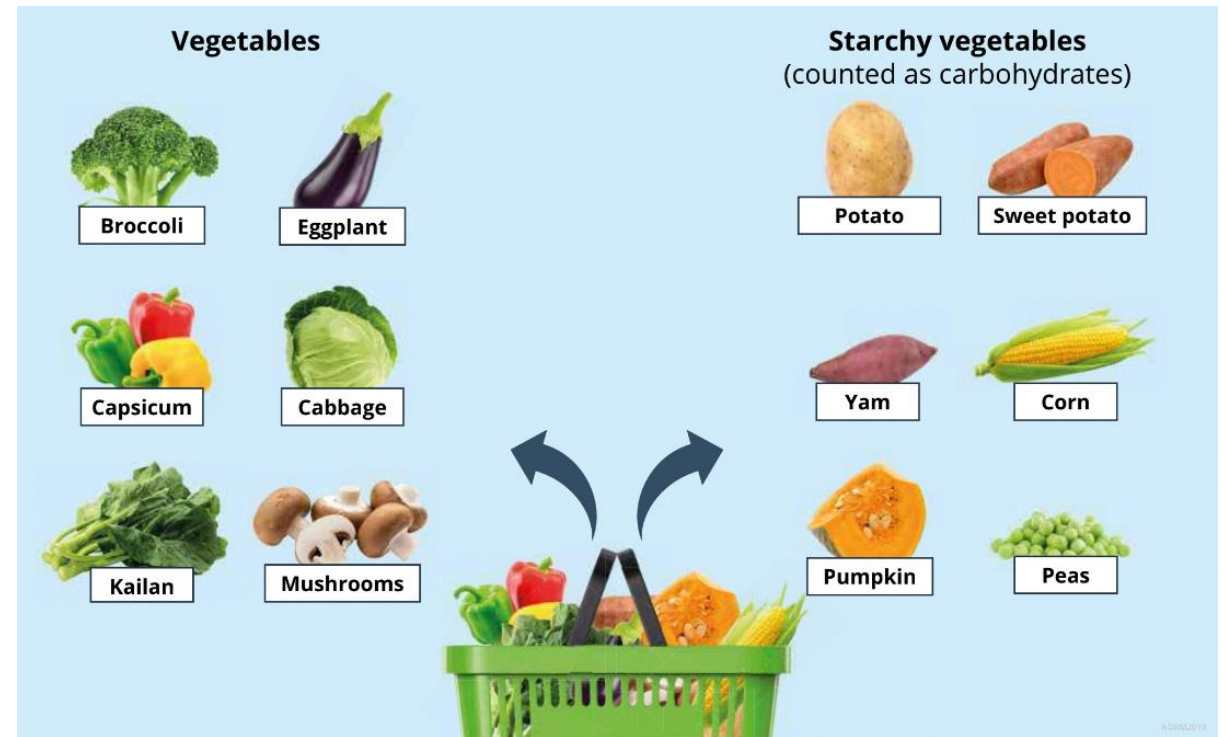
**True or False?**

Answer:  
**FALSE**

**People with diabetes can also eat starchy vegetables.**

Though starchy vegetables contain carbohydrates (carbs), they are also rich in antioxidant vitamins, minerals and fibre, and should be included in your diet in moderation.

If you're counting carbs, include starchy vegetables in your daily carb allotment. If you're using My Healthy Plate, starchy foods including starchy vegetables should make up **one-quarter** of your plate.



*This image was adapted from the National Diabetes Reference Materials*

There are no “bad” vegetables to avoid for diabetes. Instead, eat a variety of vegetables a day. Choose those with higher fibre to get the nutrients you need while managing your blood glucose level.

Protein is better than  
carbs for diabetes.

**True or False?**

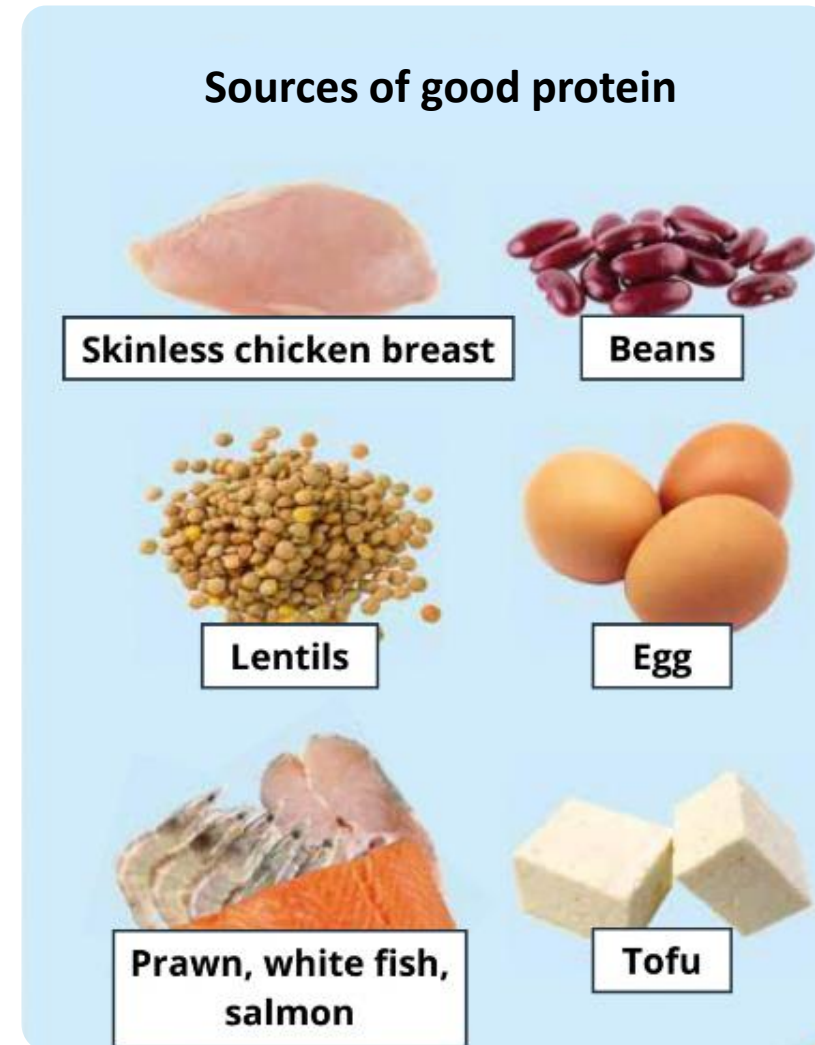
# Answer: **FALSE**

**Just because** carbohydrates cause blood glucose levels to go up quickly, you may think it is best to eat less of them and eat more protein instead.

If you start eating too much protein with saturated fat or you have certain medical conditions that limit protein intake, you may be risking your health.

Eating a variety of nutritious foods in the right proportions is essential for good health.

If you have medical conditions such as kidney disease and gout, talk to your healthcare team about how much protein is right for you.



*This image was adapted from the National Diabetes Reference Materials*

Wholegrains are good  
for diabetes.

**True or False?**



# Answer: **TRUE**



Healthier choices



Eat less

**Whole grains** help to stabilize blood glucose levels when taken in moderation. This is because they get digested slowly and do not cause your blood glucose levels to spike.

Other foods that fill you and keep your blood glucose levels constant include fibre-rich foods.

Eat them in moderation.



**Fibre-rich food**



**Wholegrain starchy food**



**Whole fruit**



**Fruit juices**



**Dried fruit**



Fruits are bad for  
diabetes.

**True or False?**



Answer: **FALSE**

**People with diabetes should eat fruits.**

Though fruits contain carbohydrates, they are a rich source of antioxidant vitamins, minerals and fibre.

There is no 'best' or 'worst' fruit to eat for diabetes. Instead, eat a variety of fruits and keep to 2 portions of fresh fruit a day. Choose fresh fruit instead of canned fruit, juices or dried fruits.

People with diabetes can still enjoy their favourite fruit like mango and durian which are higher in sugar, as long as they have them in moderation.



Persons on insulin must  
eat more carbs.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

To keep your blood glucose levels steady throughout the day, you should eat about the **same amount of carbohydrates (carbs)** at each meal.

Unless you are using an insulin pump or taking short-acting insulin at mealtimes to match the amount of carbs you eat, most people with type 2 diabetes should stick to eating around **45 to 60 grams** of carbs per meal.

That number may go up or down, depending on your body size, how active you are and how much medicines you are taking, so check with your healthcare team.

Example of 45 to 60g of carbs:

- 1 bowl of sliced fish noodles
- 1 plate of rice with chicken and stir-fried vegetables



Eating regular meals is good  
for diabetes.

**True or False?**



# Answer: **TRUE**



**Eat regular meals**, preferably three meals taken 3-5 hours apart at similar times of the day, every day. Over time, this will improve HBA1c and insulin sensitivity.

*Sample daily meal schedule:*

7:00 – 8:00 am	Breakfast
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch
5:00 – 6:00 pm	Dinner

If your job includes working night shift, eating regular meals can be tricky. Talk to your healthcare team to see what works best for you.

Since I'm on diabetes medication, I can eat all I want.

**True or False?**





Answer: **FALSE**

**Taking your medication** as prescribed by your doctor is important, but so is eating a healthy balanced diet and staying active.

This is because following a diet that's rich in nutrients like wholegrain, lean meat and fibre not only helps you manage your diabetes, it can also help you manage weight and other health conditions, such as high blood pressure and lipid disorders.

I can eat as much sweets as I want when I've hypoglycaemia.

**True or False?**



# Answer: **FALSE**

**A hypoglycaemic episode is not an excuse** to indulge in too much sugary snacks as this may cause your blood glucose levels to spike.

Follow 15/15 rule if your blood glucose is low (below 4.0 mmol/L). Have 15 grams of fast-acting sugars, and check blood glucose 15 minutes later.

## Examples of 15 grams of fast-acting sugars:



1 tbs honey or jam



4 small sugar packets or 1 tbs sugar dissolved in water



½ glass sweetened drink, e.g. fruit juice or regular soda



3 soft candies (sugar-containing)

**Note: Milo is not a fast-acting carb.**

Artificial sweeteners are helpful for diabetes.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **DEPENDS**

**While using artificial sweeteners** in place of regular sugar in beverages can help prevent blood glucose spikes and reduce caloric intake, taking medication, controlling carb and fat intake, and having regular physical activity play a more important role in managing diabetes.

In the long run, you can get so used to high levels of sweetness that naturally sweet foods such as fruits and certain vegetables lose their appeal.

Instead of relying on artificial sweeteners, here are tips to reduce your sugar intake:

- ✓ drink water
- ✓ avoid certain triggers (e.g. boredom, after a meal)
- ✓ gradually reduce sugar intake from what you are already taking. For example, add 1 instead of 2 tsp sugar to adjust to the taste of less sugar in your coffee. Slowly wean off sweetened coffee until you're drinking kopi-kosong.



Special “diabetic” foods are  
the best choices.

**True or False?**





Answer: **FALSE**

**Foods marketed specifically** at people with diabetes are often more expensive and offer little additional health benefits.

Most of the time, the foods that are healthy choices for the rest of the family are also good for people with diabetes.

You can easily find these foods in the “regular” sections of the supermarket and you don’t have to pay more for them.

While “diabetic” foods may work for some people, they should not replace a healthy and balanced diet.

It is okay to swap solid food  
with a meal replacement.

**True or False?**



# Answer: **FALSE**

**A meal replacement** is a shake, cookie, soup or bar intended as a substitute for solid food with controlled amount of calories and nutrients.

They are usually less nutritious than wholesome healthy meals as they lack sufficient vitamins, minerals, calories and proteins to meet the body's dietary needs. In the long run, this could lead to muscle loss, reduced metabolism and fatigue.

Consult your healthcare team if you plan to include meal replacement as part of your weight loss plan.

Return to ['Navigate by purpose'](#)



How much do you know about ...

# Fat and cholesterol



All cholesterol is bad.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

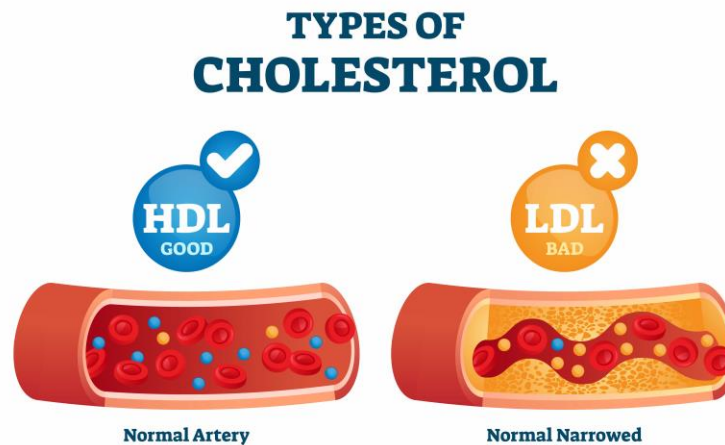
**Cholesterol is not all bad.** Some types of cholesterol are needed for good health. Your body needs cholesterol to make hormones and build cells.

Cholesterol is carried through the blood on proteins called lipoproteins. Two types of lipoproteins:



## High-density lipoprotein (HDL)

- “good” cholesterol
- carries cholesterol to the liver so that excess cholesterol gets flushed out from our body.



## Low-density lipoprotein (LDL)



- “bad” cholesterol
- too much LDL blocks our blood vessels, increasing our risk for heart disease and stroke.

All fat is bad.

**True or False?**

# Answer: FALSE

**Fat is not all bad.** Fat provides your body with an energy store, cushions your organs and carries fat-soluble vitamins. That is why you need to have some fat in your diet.

There are 4 types of fat:

**EAT LESS** Saturated Fat  
↑ LDL-cholesterol

Found in:

- **(animal):** butter, lard, ghee, fat/skin on meat, full cream dairy products
- **(plant)** palm kernel oil, non-dairy creamer, coconut oil, coconut milk, cocoa butter

**EAT LESS** Trans Fat  
↑ LDL-cholesterol  
↓ HDL-cholesterol

Found in:

- **fried foods** (e.g. fries, potato chips, donuts)
- **baked goods** (e.g. pastries, biscuits, cookies)
- **shortenings**, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil

**EAT RIGHT** Monounsaturated & Polyunsaturated Fat  
↓ LDL-cholesterol

Found in:

- avocados, nuts, seeds
- **fatty fish:** salmon, mackerel, tuna, sardines
- **cooking oil:** soybean oil, corn oil, canola oil, sesame oil, peanut oil, rice bran oil, sunflower oil, olive oil



TIPS

- ✓ Limit total fat intake.
- ✓ Choose healthier fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat).

Trans-fat should be avoided  
as much as possible.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **TRUE**

Trans-fat increases your risk of heart disease by lowering HDL (good) cholesterol and raising LDL (bad) cholesterol.

## So what should you do?

Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>1 cup (230g)</b>
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>245</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 12g	<b>14%</b>
Saturated Fat 2g	<b>10%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 8mg	<b>3%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 210mg	<b>9%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 34g	<b>12%</b>
Dietary Fiber 7g	<b>25%</b>
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 4g Added Sugars	<b>8%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 11g	
Vit. D 4mcg 20%	Calcium 210mg 16%
Iron 3mg 15%	Potassium 380mg 8%

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



### Read food labels

Check for ingredients such as “partially hydrogenated oil” and “partially hydrogenated shortening” as these are sources of trans fat.

### Look out for HCS

Products with less than 0.5g of trans fat per 100g of fat are labelled “Trans Fat Free”.

### Buy less “junk food”

Eat food products such as potato chips, cookies and frozen pizzas less often.

### Choose healthier oil

Find out more about the [different types of cooking oils](#).

### Less red meat, more fruits and vegetables

There's not much I can do to lower my blood cholesterol.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**You can do** many things to keep your cholesterol levels in a healthy range:

## At Home:

- Use healthier **cooking methods**.
- Eat **fish** at least twice a week.
- Replace meat in dishes with **beans/bean products** (e.g. tofu).



- Use less oil in cooking.
- Choose healthier **cooking oils**.
- Try not to reuse oils more than twice.

## When Eating Out:



- Choose **soup dishes**.
- Eat **deep-fried food** no more than twice a week.
- Remove **skin** from meat and poultry.
- Eat **pastries, cakes and cookies** less often.
- Ask for less **sauces and gravies**.

## When Shopping:



Lower in Saturated Fat



Trans Fat Free

- Choose **HCS products**.
- Read food labels to compare the amount of fat in food products.

## Others:

- Stay active.
- Don't smoke.
- Have regular health checks.
- Some people at greater risk of heart disease may need to take medicines. If you are given medications to manage your cholesterol, take them as they are prescribed.



I can manage my cholesterol  
with diet and exercise alone.

**True or False?**

Answer: **DEPENDS**

**Everyone should make healthy food choices and get enough physical activity to achieve good cholesterol levels.**

People with very high levels of LDL (“bad” cholesterol), type 2 diabetes or heart disease may need additional help from medicines to manage their cholesterol.

Talk to your healthcare team about the best ways to manage your cholesterol.



I should avoid  
cholesterol-containing foods.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **DEPENDS**



**Not all cholesterol-rich foods** are bad for health.

Limit only those cholesterol-rich foods with a lot of saturated and trans fat such as: full fat dairy foods, animal fats (e.g. butter, ghee, margarines, lard, suet, drippings) and processed meat products (e.g. sausages, bacons, luncheon meat).

- ✓ Replace them with [nutritious high-cholesterol foods](#) that are loaded with vitamins and minerals (e.g. eggs, sardines, shellfish, low-fat dairy like milk, cheese and yoghurt).
- ✓ Limit intake of cholesterol to not more than 300mg per day.

Eating eggs will make my  
cholesterol levels go up.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**Eggs alone will not** make our cholesterol go up.

Cholesterol levels have more to do with the saturated and trans fats, than cholesterol in the foods. For example, the side of bacon and sausage we eat along with the egg.

Although eggs are naturally high in cholesterol, they also contain healthy nutrients, including vitamins A and D, and provide a good source of protein.

- ✓ Include eggs as part of a balanced diet.
- ✓ If you like eggs but don't want the cholesterol, use only the egg whites which contain protein.



Eating fish is good for persons  
with lipid disorders.

**True or False?**



Answer: **TRUE**

**Fatty fish** has high levels of omega-3 fatty acids. Eat them in moderation to help reduce your triglycerides and lower your blood pressure and risk of developing heart disease.

*E.g. mackerel, tuna, batang, sardines, salmon, trout*

- ✓ Eat two servings of fish or more a week.
- ✓ Bake or grill to reduce fat intake.





Eating fat causes  
weight gain.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**While it is true** that eating too much of any macronutrient, including fat, leads to weight gain, eating foods rich in good fats is an essential part of a healthy balanced diet.

In fact, adding healthy fat to meals and snacks may help you lose weight by making you feel full longer between meals, and preventing blood glucose from spiking.

- ✓ Limit total fat intake.
- ✓ Choose [healthier fats](#) (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat).



Since I'm on cholesterol-lowering medication, I can eat all I want.

**True or False?**

Answer: **FALSE**

**Taking medication to lower cholesterol** as prescribed by your doctor is important, but so is eating a healthy balanced diet and staying active.

This is because following a heart-healthy diet that includes wholegrain, lean meat, fibre and healthy fat not only helps you manage your high cholesterol, it can also help you manage other conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.



How much do you know about ...

# Salt

It's okay to eat a lot of salt as excess salt gets passed out in the urine.

**True or False?**



# Answer: **FALSE**

Our body needs a small amount of sodium to work properly, but **too much sodium is bad** for our health.

When we eat a large amount of salt, our blood sodium levels rise and water gets retained in the body. This increases the risk of high blood pressure which is a major cause of stroke and heart disease.

- ✓ Keep [sodium intake](#) to no more than 2000 mg sodium or about 1 teaspoon of table salt a day.





Our dietary salt intake comes  
mainly from table salt.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**In reality,** 75% of sodium consumed comes from salt, sauces and seasonings added when preparing food like stir-fries, marinades, or stocks. 20% comes from processed food and the remaining 5% comes from meats and seafood.



## So what should you do?



- ✓ **Spot the hidden salt**



Lower in Sodium

- ✓ **Look out for HCS.** Healthier choice lower-sodium salt and seasonings contain at least 25% less sodium\*.

*\*Those with conditions such as Chronic Kidney Disease should consult their doctor before including lower-sodium salt in their diet.*



- ✓ **Choose fresh food** such as wholegrains, fruit and vegetables, legumes, fish, lean meat and poultry.



- ✓ **Use herbs and spices** to flavour dishes.

Gourmet salts such as sea salt are lower in sodium content.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

Sodium Content Across Different Types Of Salt	
Salt product	Average sodium content <sup>4</sup> (mg per teaspoon*)
Table salt	2,000
Kosher salt	2,000
Rock salt (including Himalayan, pink salt)	2,000
Sea salt	1,900
Lower-sodium salt (e.g. potassium salt)	1,200

\*1 teaspoon = 5 grams

<sup>4</sup>Online sources: FairPrice Online, Cold Storage, Lazada/Redmart

**Many people think** that gourmet salts such as sea salt and Himalayan pink salt are lower in sodium content and contain more minerals. Actually they contain same amounts of sodium compared to table salt and the minerals are probably too little to give you much health benefits.

Table salt, also known as sodium chloride, is made up of about 40% sodium and 60% chloride. It's the sodium that we must watch out for.

Lower sodium salts are safe for most people when taken in moderation.

**True or False?**



Answer: **TRUE**

Lower sodium salts or salt substitutes are **safe for most healthy people** when used in moderation.

However, if you have medical conditions that prevent potassium from being passed out by the kidneys or heart problems, you should check with your doctor before including lower sodium salts in your diet.



Too much salt masks the  
true flavours of food.

**True or False?**



Answer: **TRUE**

**Using excess salt** during cooking actually masks the true flavours of your food.

- ✓ Use lower-sodium salts or seasonings, which has at least 25% less sodium, along with herbs and spices to add flavour and colour to your dishes.

Check out these [delicious low sodium recipes](#):



It is hard to find lower sodium products and meals.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**You can find** lower-sodium salt products in most supermarkets and retailers.



Nutrition Facts	
6 servings per container	
Serving size 1 cup (230g)	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>245</b>
*% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	14%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 8mg	3%
Sodium 210mg	9%
Total Carbohydrate 34g	12%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 4g Added Sugars	8%
<b>Protein 11g</b>	
Vit. D 4mcg 20%	Calcium 210mg 16%
Iron 3mg 15%	Potassium 380mg 8%

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



- ✓ Look for grocery items (e.g. salt, sauces, seasonings, cooking pastes) with the Healthier Choice Symbol and “Lower in Sodium” label.

- ✓ Read the sodium content on the Nutrition Information Panel.

- ✓ Choose fresh vegetables and meat instead of processed/ canned foods.

- ✓ Use herbs, spices and natural ingredients to flavour food.

A low salt (sodium) diet can help lower blood pressure.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **TRUE**

**Ideally, we should** limit intake of salt to less than 5g of salt (just under a teaspoon) or 2000mg sodium per day.

In addition to [cutting down on salt intake](#), choose foods that are rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fibre and protein, and low in saturated fat.



**Wholegrains**



**Fruits and leafy vegetables**



**Low fat milk**



**Nuts, seeds, legumes**



**Lean meat (e.g., poultry, fish)**

How much do you know about ...

# Food labelling



compares packaged foods  
across different categories.

**True or False?**



# Answer: **FALSE**

Packaged products with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) are healthier as compared to products in the **same food category** since they contain less sodium, saturated fat, sugar and, or free of trans fat, or are higher in calcium, dietary fibre and wholegrains.

For example, when comparing two different brands of soya sauce, a bottle of soya sauce with the HCS that carries a tagline "Lower in Sodium" is the healthier option. This helps consumers tell which products are better for their diet than others.

Find out more about different [HCS labels](#).



Trans Fat Free



Eat 2+2 servings of  
fruits and vegetables daily



Higher in Calcium



Higher in Wholegrains



Less Than 100 Calories



Low Glycemic Index



Lower in Saturated Fat



Lower in Sugar

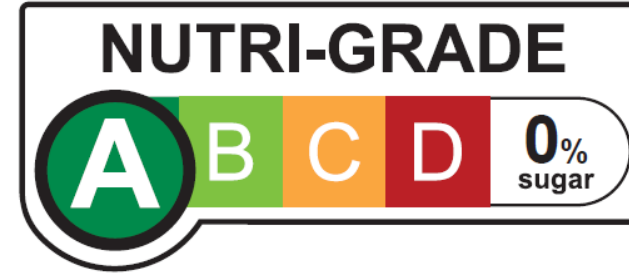


Lower in Sodium

Both



and



are the same.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

The Healthier Choice Symbol is a **voluntary** scheme for **product manufacturers**. It can be used concurrently with a Nutri-Grade label of A or B.

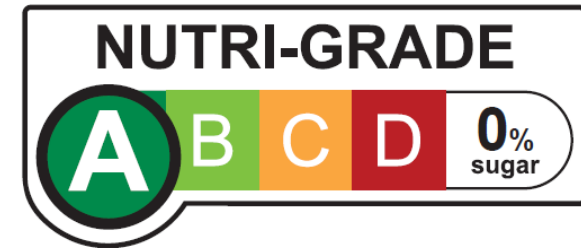
The Nutri-Grade mark, on the other hand, is a labelling scheme for **beverages** based on their sugar and saturated fat content.

Nutri-Grade beverages graded “C” or “D” will be labelled with a Nutri-Grade mark, while labelling of beverages graded “A” or “B” is optional.

Consumers are encouraged to limit intake of Nutri-Grade “C”/”D” beverages, and choose HCS, Nutri-Grade “A”/”B” beverages or simply water to reduce their sugar and saturated fat intake.



Eat All Foods in Moderation



Plain green tea



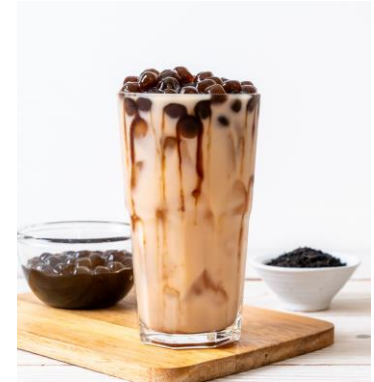
Kopi O Siu Dai



Can of regular soft drink



Bubble Tea with brown sugar, cocoa and condensed milk sago



# Which drink should you choose?

Sugar and Saturated Fat

# Answer:



Choose healthier drinks (e.g. no sugar added or reduced sugar) whenever possible.

Your best choice is still water. It keeps you hydrated, relieves constipation, has no calories and is FREE! Add a slice of lemon to a glass of water for a mild citrus flavour.



# Physical Activity

*Take small steps to make big changes.*

How much do you know about ...

# Physical activity



Someone who is thin is  
physically fit.

**True or False?**

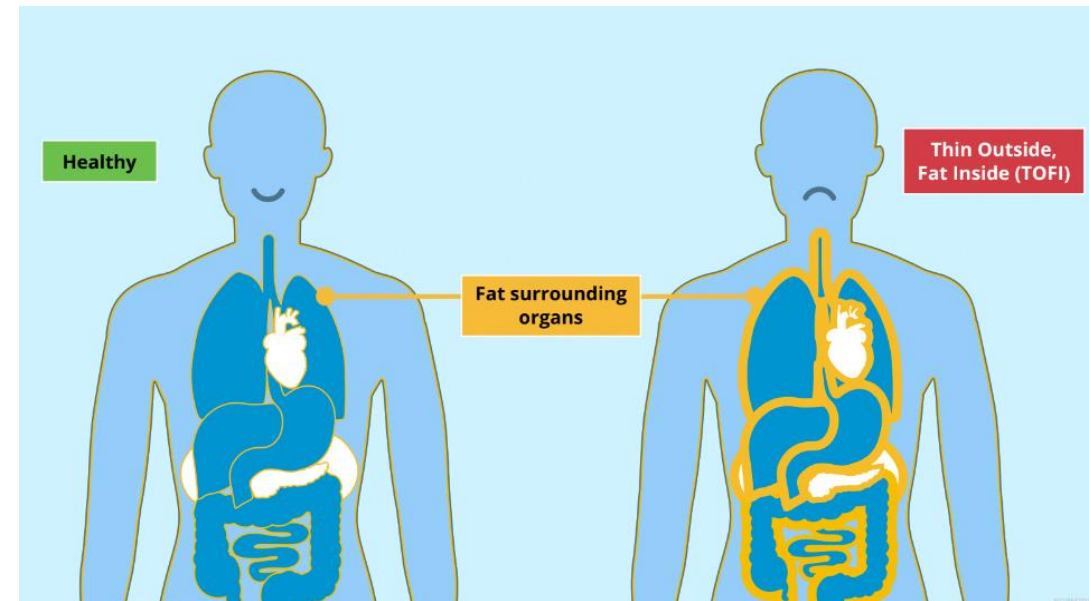
# Answer: **FALSE**

**Being physically healthy and fit** involves not only how we look, but also how we feel and our overall health.

Being physically fit means having strong and healthy heart, lungs, muscles, bones and joints.

Just because someone is thin or of normal weight doesn't mean he or she has good stamina, can run a long distance, lift a heavy bag or has improved posture and balance. Excess fat may be stored in their body even if they look thin.

We need regular physical activity and a healthy balanced diet to help us stay healthy and prevent disease.



*This image was adapted from the National Diabetes Reference Materials*

People don't meet their activity goals because they lack will-power.

**True or False?**

Answer: **FALSE**

We may have chosen a goal that's unrealistic. Even highly motivated people don't always meet their goals.

We must not give up hope!

Set a new goal that's **more doable**. Setting small but realistic goals helps us focus our efforts on what is actually achievable.

Then slowly work up to it by achieving smaller goals along the way.



You have to go to the gym.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**Going to the gym is not** the only way to get some exercise.

- ✓ Try walking. Walk the dog. Take the stairs. Alight one bus-stop earlier and walk to office.
- ✓ Even household chores like mopping the floor or cleaning after the kids count.
- ✓ Want to do [strength training at home](#)? From wall push-ups to using water bottles as weights, you can get a full body workout without any equipment.
- ✓ And there are plenty of free exercise videos that will turn your living room into a fitness studio.

Return to [‘Navigate by purpose’](#)



Running is a better  
exercise than walking.

**True or False?**





Answer: **FALSE**

Return to ['Navigate by purpose'](#)

**Brisk walking is a wonderful way** to get a stronger heart and lungs.

For people who are very overweight or have certain medical conditions, walking can be a more suitable exercise. It is way better than being sedentary.

If you have not exercised for a long time, start at a pace that's comfortable for you. Then gradually pick up speed until you're walking briskly.

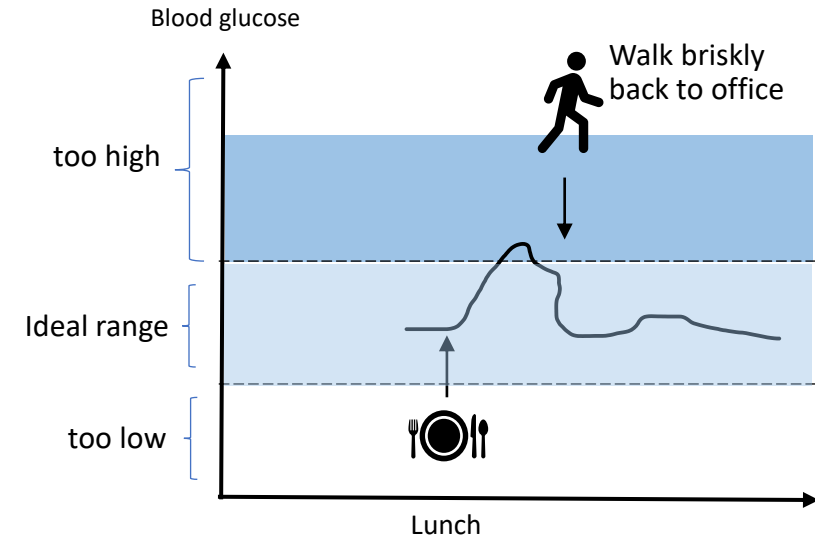
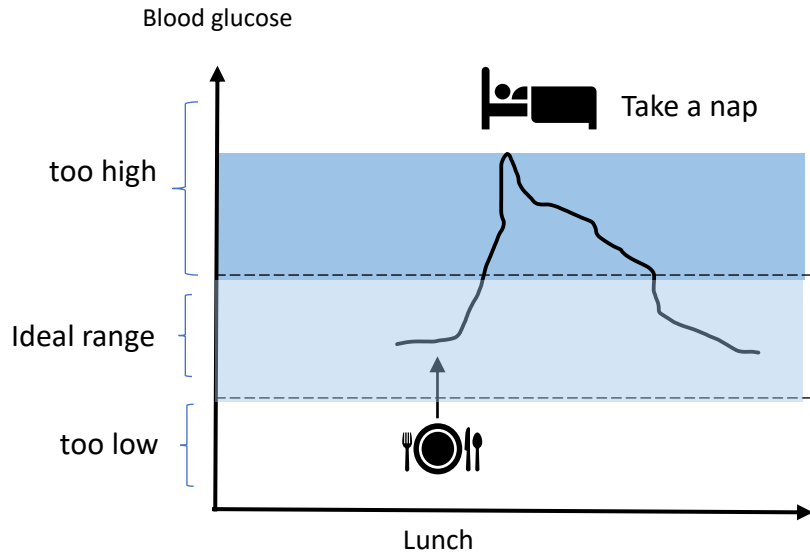
- ✓ Aim for 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic exercise every week. You don't have to do all 150 minutes at once. If it's easier or more convenient, do several 10 minute sessions throughout the week or 30 minute sessions over 5 days.

It is good to have  
an activity around  
meal time.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **TRUE**

For sedentary people, taking a walk after a meal could lower blood glucose levels.



Fried rice,  
kopi-O



Chicken bryani,  
half bowl chendol,  
kopi-O

## TIPS

- ✓ Try activity after lunch:
  - 15 mins brisk walk from food court
  - 15 mins brisk walk back to office
  - 5 mins to climb up a few flights of stairs
  - 20 mins to run a quick errand

- ✓ Try activity after dinner:
  - 20 mins to walk the dog
  - 30 mins to play with the kids
  - 10 mins stretch & squat while watching tv
  - 10 mins balancing exercise while washing dishes

I worked out today so I can eat without any restriction.

**True or False?**





Answer: **FALSE**

**Exercise is not a “free pass” for over-eating.**

Sometimes, overeating after exercise has become a habit. When you consistently treat yourself to bubble tea or chocolate bar after a work-out, you start to repeat the action no matter how long or intense the exercise was.

Tips to avoid over-eating after a work-out:

- ✓ Drink water
- ✓ Take a cool shower
- ✓ If you must eat, have a [healthy snack](#) within an hour of completing a work-out.

One is too old to exercise.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

Physical activity is key to **healthy ageing**.

Regular physical activity increases our ability to perform routine daily tasks and stay independent longer.

If you are aged 50 and above, do a mix of physical activity, especially **strength, balance and flexibility** exercises at least 3 days a week.

For example, do exercises such as Tai Chi, Pilates or swimming to strengthen your muscles and balance. On other days that week, do aerobic exercises such as brisk walking, Zumba or cycling to improve your heart health and circulation.

If you have been sedentary for a while or have medical conditions, check with your healthcare team before starting any exercise programme more vigorous than brisk walking.





I should not do strength training exercises because I could fall and hurt myself.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**



**Older persons are encouraged** to engage in [strength training activities](#) at least 2 days a week as part of their exercise regime.

We need strength to get up from a chair, climb stairs, get in and out of the car, carry groceries, push or pull open a door, etc.

Having sufficient strength in our legs reduces the risk of falls as we age. It also reduces the risk of developing osteoporosis and helps with balance and postural control.

If you have existing medical conditions such as diabetes or heart disease, ask your doctor to design an exercise regime more suited to you.

How much do you know about ...

# Physical activity & Diabetes, Hypertension and Lipid Disorders (DHL)

Exercise makes it easier to  
manage your diabetes.

**True or False?**



Answer: **TRUE**

**The increased insulin sensitivity** that you get from regular exercise makes management of diabetes easier in the long-run.

However, if you are on insulin, this can take a bit of work and trial-and-error.

When you start exercising at first, you may find your blood glucose levels lower than normal.

- ✓ Always check with your healthcare team before starting any exercise programme.
- ✓ Gradually increase your physical activity.
- ✓ Keep a record so that you understand your blood glucose patterns.
- ✓ Over time, learn how to adjust food, activity and medication to keep your blood glucose levels stable.

You don't need the gym to  
manage your diabetes.

**True or False?**



# Answer: **TRUE**



**Going to the gym** is not the only way to keep your blood glucose under control.

- ✓ Try walking. Walk the dog. Take the stairs. Alight one bus-stop earlier and walk to your office.
- ✓ Even household chores like mopping the floor or cleaning after the kids count.

What's important is to have a well-rounded physical activity plan that includes aerobic, strength training and flexibility exercises.

Check with your healthcare team before starting any exercise programme.



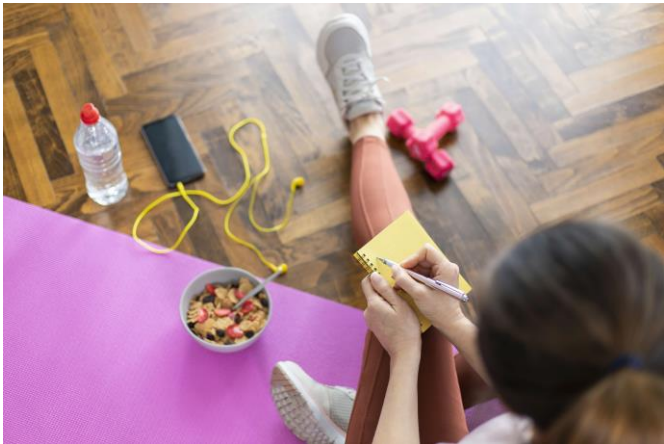
Since my blood glucose is well controlled, I don't have to plan before exercising.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**Preparation before exercise** is important for everyone! Exercise will affect our blood glucose levels, no matter how well controlled they are, so be prepared for any hypoglycaemic episodes.

Besides observing general safe exercise guidelines, persons with diabetes should take extra care:



- ✓ Go for a pre-exercise evaluation. If you have eye, foot or nerve problems, your healthcare team may advise you on what exercises to avoid.
- ✓ If you are at higher risk of hypoglycaemia, check blood glucose before and after exercising.
- ✓ Carry [fast-acting sugars](#) in case you have a hypoglycaemic episode.
- ✓ Have a small [healthy snack](#) prior to exercise. If you eat a full meal, then wait 60 minutes after the meal before you exercise.
- ✓ If you inject insulin, be aware of your injection site. For example, if you inject insulin into your arm you should not try to lift heavy weights as this will increase your risk of low blood sugar.
- ✓ Wear appropriate footwear and have regular foot check.
- ✓ If you have a medical bracelet, wear it at all times.

It is dangerous to exercise if you have high blood pressure.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

Regular physical activity combined with a healthy diet helps maintain a healthy weight and bring blood pressure down to safer levels. Exercise also strengthens the heart so it's under less strain when pumping blood to the body.

However, **avoid physical activities that raise your heart rate very quickly** especially if your high blood pressure is poorly controlled. E.g. weight lifting, sprinting, squash, high intensity interval training (HIIT) and scuba diving.

Talk to your healthcare team before starting any exercise programme.



Doing an intensive workout  
once a week is enough to  
control high blood pressure.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **FALSE**

**Doing an intensive workout** once a week does not bring your blood pressure down.

Instead, it's better to spread out your activities throughout the week. A daily 15-minutes brisk walk to the bus-stop on the way to office and back home (total 30 mins) over 5 days is better than a grueling 2 hours workout once-a-week. It can help reduce stress and control weight, hence helping to lower your blood pressure.

## **Tips:**

- ✓ Aim for 150 minutes moderate intensity aerobic exercise per week.
- ✓ Be consistent: aim to exercise 3-7 days per week.
- ✓ Combine exercise with something you like or enjoy.



You've to exercise a lot if you want to lower blood pressure.

**True or False?**



# Answer: **FALSE**

**Going from sedentary** to being more active will bring your blood pressure down to safer levels and other health benefits.

Start with a daily walk and build up gradually to 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic exercise per week.

As long as you make sure the exercise is appropriate for your age and level of fitness.

Remember, getting active is more important than becoming an athlete.

## **Tips:**

- ✓ Be consistent: aim to exercise 3-7 days per week.
- ✓ Find exercises you like or enjoy.
- ✓ Combine exercise with something you love.



You don't need to exercise if you're taking medications for high blood pressure.

**True or False?**

Answer: **FALSE**

## **Exercise can help lower your blood pressure!**

Besides taking medications, becoming more active is an important and effective way to help bring your blood pressure down to normal levels.

It can also help you to maintain a healthy weight and manage stress.

Regular physical activity combined with a healthy, balanced diet that is low in salt (sodium) can lower your blood pressure by 5 to 10 mmHg, a reduction similar to that achieved with some blood pressure drugs.

Always check with your doctor before starting any exercise programme.

Do not stop taking your medications without consulting your doctor.

Return to [‘Navigate by purpose’](#)



Exercise benefits persons with  
lipid disorders.

**True or False?**

# Answer: **TRUE**

**Moderate physical activity** can raise your HDL (“good” cholesterol) and help lower your triglycerides and LDL (“bad” cholesterol). It also helps you to stay a healthy weight and reduce stress.

## **Tips:**

- ✓ Check with your doctor before starting any new exercise programme.
- ✓ Start small and gradually work up to 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic exercise per week.
- ✓ You don't have to do all 150 minutes at once. If it's easier or more convenient, do several 10 minute sessions throughout the week.
- ✓ Replace sedentary time with activity of any type.
- ✓ Find an exercise buddy or join an exercise group.

