

November is Diabetes Awareness Month

According to statistics from the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) in 2019, the number of SA adults with diabetes has soared to 4.5-million people, more than double the figure estimated in 2017, with 12.7% of adults in SA diagnosed with diabetes in 2019, a 137% increase on the 2017 figure of 5.4%. But, as alarming, are the number of people who are undiagnosed, living blissfully unaware, while diabetes remains in hiding. The limited data suggest that there are 0.630 to 2.394 million people with undiagnosed diabetes.






It is therefore crucial to promote awareness on the prevention and the management of diabetes!

What can you do?

One of the biggest things to come to terms with when receiving a diagnosis of diabetes is that it is a condition you will have to manage for the rest of your life. Hopefully, that life will be a long, happy and healthy one and the more you can do to get and keep blood glucose under control the more likely that outcome is.

Lifestyle Changes to Control your Diabetes

1. Eat Healthy. This is crucial when you have diabetes, because what you eat affects your blood sugar. No foods are strictly off-limits. Focus on eating only as much as your body needs.

-  Eat three balanced meals per day with healthy snacks in between. If possible, consume the greater portion of kilojoules during the morning and midday, leaving a lighter meal at the end of the day, or if you have your main meal in the evening, have it early evening. This way, energy intake is proportional to natural energy expenditure and therefore, improved energy balance.
-  Eating healthy snacks in between meals help to control blood glucose levels throughout the day and to maintain energy levels, and keep you satiated for longer.
-  It is recommended to eat at least 5 portions of fresh fruit and vegetables per day, eat a variety, eat what's in season, to achieve an optimum intake of fiber, vitamins and minerals for heart health and reduced cancer risk.
-  Limit your intake of red meat and saturated fat and include more fish and plant-based protein into your diet.
-  Limit your intake of salt by preparing meals from scratch and using herbs (fresh/dry) and spices when cooking.

2. Be Active. If you are not active now, it's time to start. You don't have to join a gym and do cross-training. Just walk, ride a bike, or work in the garden. Your goal should be 30 minutes of activity that makes you sweat and breathe a little harder most days of the week. An active lifestyle helps you control your diabetes by bringing down your blood sugar. It also lowers your chances of getting heart disease. Plus, it can help you lose extra pounds and ease stress.

3. Visit your doctor or clinic regularly. Diabetes raises your odds of heart disease. So learn your numbers: cholesterol, blood pressure, and A1c (average blood sugar over 3 months). Get a full eye exam every year. Visit a foot doctor to check for problems like foot ulcers and nerve damage.

4. Live mindfully and manage stress. When you're stressed, your blood sugar levels go up. And when you're anxious, you may not manage your diabetes well. You may forget to exercise, eat right, or take your medicines. Find ways to relieve stress -- through deep breathing, yoga, gardening or hobbies that relax you.

5. Stop smoking. Diabetes makes you more likely to have health problems like heart disease, eye disease, stroke, kidney disease, blood vessel disease, nerve damage, and foot problems. If you smoke, your chance of getting these problems is even higher. Smoking also can make it harder to exercise.

6. Limit your alcohol intake. It may be easier to control your blood sugar if you don't get too much beer, wine, and liquor. So if you choose to drink, don't overdo it. The American Diabetes Association says that women who drink alcohol should have no more than one drink a day and men should have no more than two. Alcohol can make your blood sugar go too high or too low. Check your blood sugar before you drink, and take steps to avoid low blood sugars. If you use insulin or take drugs for your diabetes, eat when you're drinking. Some drinks -- like wine coolers -- may be higher in carbs, so take this into account when you count carbs.

A great way to be more active and to eat more whole foods that are packed with vitamins, minerals and fiber, is to take up gardening!

Even if you only have a tiny space you can grow herbs and salad vegetables to liven up your food – imagine topping pasta with a fresh and tasty tomato, garlic and basil sauce made from ingredients you have grown yourself? If you have a bigger space you can burn more energy, tone up and grow enough food to keep your family in fruit and veg all year round. Growing your own produce also means that you are much more likely to want to eat it. Nothing beats the flavor of something you have made from scratch with your own ingredients.

Prepare from Scratch!

Make soups, smoothies and pasta sauces and batch freeze for healthy nutritious diabetes-friendly meals out of season or for when you are tired or busy. It's just as quick and easy to warm up a delicious red pepper and tomato soup as it is to heat a calorie and fat-laden ready meal.

A few simple methods for growing your own vegetables at home

Whether you live in a house on a big piece of land, a town house, or even an apartment without good sunlight, there are options for growing produce at home.

- **Raised Bed and In-Ground Gardens:** If you have a yard, you can plant fruit, vegetable, and herb plants in the ground, or create raised beds out of wood planks. To get started, plant vegetables like snap peas, lettuce, and other types of greens, which are very forgiving for beginners to grow.
- **Window Boxes and Potted Plants:** If your home doesn't boast a yard but has a sunny window or balcony space, potted planters and window boxes are great ways to try your hand at growing food. Herbs do very well in pots or window boxes, as do strawberries, lettuce, radishes, and green onions.
- **At-Home Aquaponics:** If you don't have much direct sunlight at your place, even that doesn't prohibit you from growing produce in your home! For advice on starting your own aquaponics at home, contact INMED SA at <https://www.inmed.org.za>.
- **Community Gardens:** If you absolutely don't have space for a garden of your own, get involved with a community garden or school garden, where you can help tend and enjoy a bounty from.

While diabetes management can seem like a burden, there are many ways to transform it into a therapeutic and even fun activity. Gardening not only helps you grow the healthy foods that comprise a diabetic diet but also provides a setting in which you can unwind and burn some calories.

As part of a healthy balanced diabetic eating plan, leafy greens are great. They are extremely nutritious, low in calories, and low in digestible carbs (which can raise blood sugar levels). Additionally, they are also high in vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin C, that has been proven to reduce inflammatory markers for fasting blood sugar levels. Vegetables are an important part of healthy eating and provide a source of many nutrients, including potassium, fiber, folate (folic acid) and vitamins A, E and C.

These vegetables are excellent to incorporate into your 5 portions a day, and are also easy to grow in your garden: asparagus, avocados, beet greens, bell peppers, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, collard greens, cucumbers, fennel, green beans, kale, mushrooms, mustard greens, olives, romaine lettuce (and other lettuce), spinach, summer squash, Swiss chard, tomatoes, turnip greens.

A few of my favourites!



Spinach

The health benefits of eating spinach include improving blood glucose, lowering the risk of cancer, and improving bone health, as well as supplying critical minerals and vitamins.

❖ Broccoli

Broccoli is another superfood that is high in vitamins and nutrients, it is a great source of vitamins K and C, a good source of folic acid and also provides potassium and fiber.

❖ Cabbage

Cabbage is another superfood and is rich in vitamin B6 and folate, both of which are essential for many important processes in the body, including energy metabolism and the nervous system.

❖ Zucchini or Baby marrow

Zucchini contains a variety of vitamins, minerals, and beneficial plant compounds, and is particularly good at lowering cholesterol levels and is high in folates and carotenes, as well as vitamins A and C.

❖ Tomato

Tomatoes are the major dietary source of the antioxidant lycopene, which has been linked to many health benefits, including reduced risk of heart disease and cancer. They are also a great source of vitamin C, potassium, folate, and vitamin K.

Growing Tomatoes in Containers

1. Use a large pot or container with drainage holes in the bottom.
2. Use loose, well-draining soil. ...
3. Plant one **tomato** plant per pot. ...
4. Taller varieties may need to be staked.
5. Place the pot in a sunny spot with 6 to 8 hours of full sun a day.
6. Keep soil moist.



Healthy Recipes from your Garden

Spinach Tomato Quiche



Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cups fresh spinach leaves (trimmed and washed thoroughly)
- 4 large eggs
- 2/3 cup heavy cream (or milk, half and half, etc...)
- 1/3 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1-2 plum tomatoes (diced)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Easy crust ingredients:

- 1 cup cake flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup ice cold water

Method:

1. First, make the crust. Mix the flour and salt in a medium bowl. Set aside. In a separate bowl, beat the oil and water with a whisk or fork to thicken. Pour into flour and mix with fork. Press dough into a 23 cm pie dish. Make sure you thin out the dough so you end up with a crispy, flaky crust instead of a thick doughy one!
2. Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F) and make the quiche filling.
3. Crumble the feta cheese onto the bottom of the crust. Next, pour the olive oil into a saucepan and, when it is heated, toss in the spinach and cook until wilted. Once wilted, spread the spinach over the cheese.
4. Beat the eggs and garlic with the milk. Season with salt and pepper. Pour over top of the feta cheese and spinach. Top with diced tomatoes or arrange slices on top of the quiche. Top with more freshly ground pepper if desired.
5. Fill crust with quiche mixture and bake at 180°C (350°F) for approximately 35-45 minutes until fully baked and set. Enjoy! Leftover slices can be reheated and enjoyed for up to 4 days.

Nutritional Information per serving:

Energy: 800 kJ, Protein: 10.0 g, Total fat: 10.1 g, Carbs: 15.6 g, Fiber: 1.8 g, Sodium: 571 mg.

Magic Romesco Sauce

Serves 6



Nutritional Information: [Per 100 g serving:
Energy: 433 kJ, Protein: 1 g, Carbs: 2 g,
Total fat: 10.2 g, Saturated fat: 0.8 g,
Fiber: 0.9 g, Sodium: 4 mg]

Ingredients:

- 1 large Red Pepper, roasted (brush with olive oil and grill in oven or griddle pan)
- 1 cup Roma Tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- ¼ cup Olive/canola oil
- 3 TBSP Peanut Butter (unsalted)
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp spanish smoked paprika
- Herb salt & ground black pepper

Method:

- Blend: Add all ingredients to a food processor or blender and blend until smooth.

Serve warm or cold with just about anything... vegetables, whole-wheat pasta or pita wedges etc.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups baby spinach, washed & dried
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 TBSP pine-nuts or plain cashews or flaked almonds
- ±1/3 cup Olive oil
- 2 TBSP parmesan cheese, grated
- Herbs salt & ground black pepper

Method:

- Place spinach, garlic and nuts into a food processor and blend.
- Slowly add olive oil to make a thick paste.
- Turn mixture into a mixing bowl and stir in grated parmesan cheese.
- Season.

Spinach Pesto Sauce

(makes a small jar ±300 ml)



Nutritional Information: Per serving of 2TBSP:
Energy: 650 kJ, Protein: 3 g, Total Fat: 15 g,
Saturated Fat: 2 g, Carbs: 2 g, Fiber: 2.4 g, Sodium:
107 mg]

Healthy Garden Salads

Smart tips to build a healthy salad:

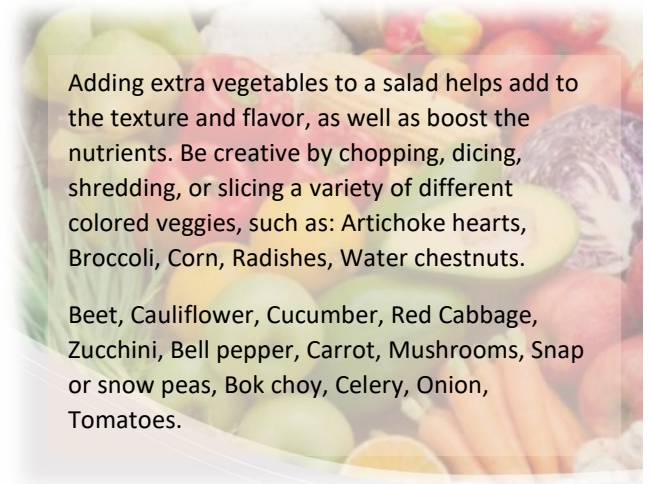
Pack more nutrition into your day with a colourful, nutrient-dense salad. Keep basic ingredients on hand at home for a quick addition to any meal. Encourage kids to eat more vegetables by setting out ingredients to make their own salad creations.

Step 1: Build Your Base



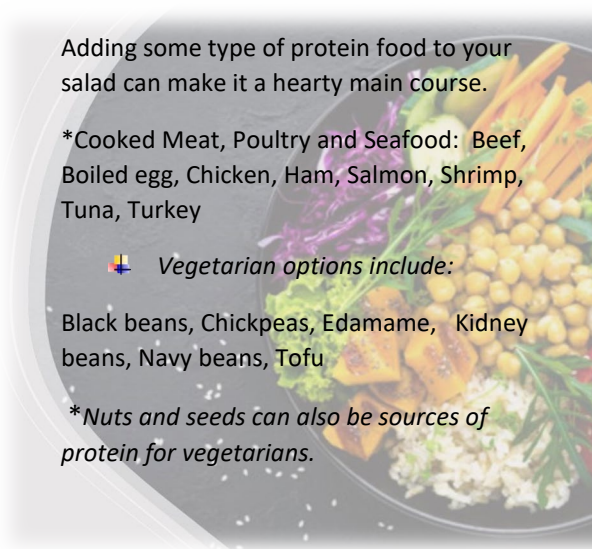
Step 2: Boost the Nutrients with Extra

Vegetables and Fruits



Fruits may also work well in salads and add a little sweetness to the combination. Examples include: Apple, Mandarin Oranges, Fresh Berries, Melon, Dried cherries, Pear, Grapes, Raisins.

Step 3: Consider Adding Protein to Make it a Main Dish



* Sprinkle on extras

These tasty toppings carry a larger amount of calories in a small portion size. Use them sparingly to top off a salad. You can also get creative by adding cooked grains to your salad. These foods can help balance out your meal. Plus, they add additional flavors and texture to your salad.



Step 4:

Dress your salad



Dress your salad with a small amount of dressing. For options lower in saturated fat, consider oil and vinegar or yogurt-based dressings instead of traditional creamy options. Salsa can also be a fun way to top a salad. Garnish with a snip of fresh herbs, if desired.



Prepare from Scratch! Live Healthy! Eat Healthy! Be Active!

Grow your own fruit and vegetables as part of a healthy lifestyle ❤️

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