



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.
- 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 difficult or 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, 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 your health care team. You may need to see an eating disorders specialist who knows about diabetes.
- Ask your health care team to help you set realistic and healthy weight and blood glucose goals.
- Ask your registered dietitian (RD) 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 RD 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.
- You may want to see a mental health professional to talk about why you are binge eating and help learn new eating behaviors. Ask your health care providers for a referral.

Tips for under eaters

- Your RD 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.
- 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 ice pops
- broth
- tea
- sugar-free gelatin dessert
- sugar-free gum
- diet soda or soft drinks
- coffee

Low-calorie foods

- 6 oz. sugar-free hot chocolate
- 1 cup raw vegetables
- 3 cups air-popped or low-fat popcorn
- 1 oz. fat-free lunch meat
- 1 cup tossed salad with 1 Tbsp. oil-free salad dressing
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat pudding
- 1 Tbsp. dip made with non-fat sour cream
- 2 rice cakes
- 1 oz. fat-free cheese

Set your sights

1. A realistic target weight for me is _____ lb.

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

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

The above information is adapted from material by and reprinted with permission from: American Diabetes Association and American Dietetic Association.

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>