



## SUGAR

- Most people think that sugar is the first thing that should be avoided with diabetes. Although this was believed to be true many years ago, it is now recognized that small amounts of added sugar and foods naturally containing sugar can be safely eaten by someone with diabetes. This is because different types of sugar have different effects on blood glucose levels. Sugar containing foods are best eaten with other food.
- Sugary foods are generally found in the Eat Least section of the Healthy Food Pyramid, and include sugar, honey, jam, jelly, soft drink, cordial, confectionery, chocolate, cake, biscuits and pastries.
- These foods are best kept to small quantities because:
  - × some also contain fat, which should be minimised to control weight and heart disease.
  - × they contain very little other nutritional value.
  - × large amounts of sugar may effect blood glucose levels.

### How much is a “small amount”?

- A “small amount” of sugar is an amount that can be measured by 1 to 2 teaspoons, at each meal. Examples of this would be:
  - ✓ a scrape of regular jam or honey on a piece of grainy toast.
  - ✓ a teaspoon of sugar in tea or coffee at meal times.
  - ✓ sugar in savoury foods like baked beans and tomato sauce.
  - ✓ a teaspoon of sugar or honey on porridge.
- Some sugary foods are usually consumed in larger amounts, for example:
  - × a glass of soft drink or cordial.
  - × a bowl of regular jelly.In this case, avoid or try the sugar-free alternative eg. diet soft drink, low joule jelly.
- Consult an Accredited Practising Dietitian for individual guidance on these foods.

-  **Sugary foods are generally found in the Eat Least section of the Healthy Food Pyramid. They can be safely eaten by most people with diabetes in small amounts.**
  
-  **A small amount of sugar is an amount that can be measured by 1 to 2 teaspoons. This quantity is acceptable for most people at each meal.**

### **Important Message - Not all sugars are the same!**

There are many different types of sugar which all have very different effects on blood glucose levels:

- Glucose (found in confectionery) – very quick acting (high glycemic index), with a rapid effect on blood glucose levels.
  
- Sucrose (table sugar) – medium acting (intermediate glycemic index), with a moderate effect on blood glucose levels.
  
- Lactose (found in dairy foods) and Fructose (found in fruit) - very s-l-o-w acting (low glycemic index), with a good effect on blood glucose levels.

*(For more information, see “The Carbohydrate Connection” fact sheet):*