

# Evidence-based dietary advice to prevent and treat diabetes

**The Diabetes and Nutrition Study Group (DNSG) of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) has evidence-based dietary advice to prevent and treat diabetes.**

In Finland, dietary advice for diabetics has been mainly based on the Nordic Nutritional Recommendations (NNR). These recommend a diet with high levels of carbohydrates and fibre and low in fat. NNR is not particularly adapted for diabetics but rather is developed as general recommendations to the population for maintaining good health. The nutritional approach aims primarily to maintain a healthy weight or to lose weight for those in need, to avoid dietary-related diseases and to satisfy nutritional requirements.

To consume a carbohydrate-rich diet is not for everyone. For diabetics, it is often required that the diet contains a high portion of fibre and foods with low GI to maintain balanced blood sugar levels. For overweight type 2 diabetics who successfully lose weight with the help of an adapted diet, the advantages are obviously many. But for diabetic patients without an overweight problem or diabetic patients who have not been able to lose weight in spite of many attempts, it can be necessary to revise thinking. An increase in protein consumption and/or simple unsaturated fats can give direct positive effects on blood sugar levels, blood lipids and the general well-being for these patients.

The new European dietary advice for diabetics offers greater possibilities to adapt food to personal preferences and needs. Those who wish to can increase their protein and fat consumption and reduce carbohydrates. Those who have no problem with overweight can increase their consumption of fats up to 35 energy per cent with the new recommendations. Those who have no kidney complications and wish to increase their protein consumption can do so up to 20 energy per cent. Consumption of carbohydrates can be as low as 45 energy per cent, possibly somewhat lower for those having problems with high blood lipid levels.

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DNSG's nutritional guidelines are based on the best available research in the area. DNSG has evaluated and critically reviewed all of the relevant studies published on diet and diabetes. To objectively evaluate the quality of studies that form the basis for the dietary recommendations, DNSG has used an established ranking system (The Agency for Health Care and Policy and the Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network 1999).

The dietary guidelines are not only appropriate for diabetics; they can prevent overweight and thereby reduce the risk for type 2 diabetes in the general population. The dietary advice includes glucose status and insulin levels and blood pressure as well as the importance of maintaining or reaching a normal weight.

As many type 2 diabetics are overweight, weight, losing weight is an important prerequisite for reaching a good metabolic status. Regular food habits such as three meals according to a balanced diet chart, as well as 2 to 3 snacks a day are recommended, where there are specific restriction on saturated and transfats along with recommendations for the amounts of carbohydrates and proteins. The DNSG guidelines also include advice on regular physical activity. The objective of these dietary guidelines is to improve the glycaemic status and reduce the risk for cardiovascular diseases.

The DNSG meets annually where the members discuss the latest research bearing upon the Board of Director's objectives. The 25th international symposium will be held in Kuopio, Finland on 28 – 30 June See the link below for the next meeting.

*\* Energy per cent = portion of energy coming from a certain nutritional substance.*

### **DiabetesCoach**

DiabetesCoach from Nodensa AB is an internet-based self help based on DNSG's guidelines and the first product/service of this kind. Together with DNSG, DiabetesCoach gives the preconditions for following the recommendations, balancing blood sugar and improving lifestyle. Visit [www.diabetescoach.eu](http://www.diabetescoach.eu) for more information.

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**Links:**

[www.dnsg.org](http://www.dnsg.org)

[www.easd.org](http://www.easd.org)

[www.nodensa.com](http://www.nodensa.com)

**About EASD and DNSG:**

*The Study Group on Diabetes and Nutrition of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) was formed in 1982, and has worked to realize better scientific interchange on clinical and metabolic effects of nutrition in relation to diabetes, and the implementation of appropriate dietary therapy in diabetic individuals. The study group (DNSG) holds an annual international scientific congress, in which members and prospective members of the group assemble to stimulate scientific discussion with respect to the board's aims. These meetings also function to enable the Bureau and the General Assembly to conduct the annual general meeting of the Bureau, and to elect the Bureau and nominate new members. A series of satellite meetings have also been held from time to time. Please follow this link to the conferences page on the site for more detailed information about our meetings history, and for news about our upcoming conference and annual meeting. The group has established links with international academies and related study groups, notably the EASD (European Association for the Study of Diabetes). The committee of DNSG consists of 9 members elected by the members present at the business meeting of the group. Appointed committee members serve for 3 years and may remain in the committee at the end of their term if they have been selected as office-bearer.*

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**ABOUT:**

*Nodensa is a global healthcare solutions company - our fusion of innovative IT and medical technology allows us to enhance public health and the quality of peoples' lives. Nodensa has operated since 2006 from its headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden. For more information, visit Nodensa online at [www.nodensa.com](http://www.nodensa.com)*

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