

News You Can Use on Diabetes

An Update for CHAPs



— Charles Tuckfield Jr. illustration redrawn by Tim Corey

Our Vision: A life free of diabetes and its complications for all Alaska Native People

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1st Quarter 2022

CE expires March 2025



Eating Mindfully

Mindfulness is an intentional focus of one's thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations in the present moment. Eating mindfully means that you are using all of your physical and emotional senses to experience and enjoy your food. It encourages one to make choices that will satisfy and nourish the body. It helps increase gratitude for food, which can improve the overall eating experience. As we become more aware of our eating habits, we may change our behavior to benefit ourselves and our environment.

Distracted eating is the opposite of mindful eating. Eating while driving, working, talking on the phone or viewing a screen (phone, tablet or television) are all examples of distracted eating. In these situations, one is not fully focused on food or enjoying the meal experience. Distracted eating is associated with anxiety, overeating, and weight gain.

Mindful eating can be an effective tool in the treatment of emotional eating and binge eating, even if weight loss does not occur. Mindful eating practices include:

1. **Honor the food.** Acknowledge where the food was grown and who prepared the meal. Eat without distractions to help deepen the eating experience and enjoyment.
2. **Engage all senses.** Notice the sounds, colors, smells, tastes, and textures of the food and how you feel when eating. Pause periodically to engage these senses.
3. **Serve in modest portions.** Use a dinner plate no larger than 9 inches across and fill it only once.
4. **Savor small bites, and chew thoroughly.** These practices can help slow down the meal and fully experience the food's flavors.
5. **Eat slowly to avoid overeating.** If you eat slowly, you are more likely to recognize when you are feeling satisfied, or when you are about 80% full, and can stop eating.
6. **Don't skip meals.** Going too long without eating increases the risk of strong hunger, which may lead to the quickest and easiest food choice, not always a healthful one. Setting meals at around the same time each day, as well as planning for enough time to enjoy a meal or snack reduces these risks.
7. **Eat traditional foods often, for your health and for the planet.** Consider the long-term effects of eating certain foods. Many western foods are highly processed and contain unhealthy fats and sugars that can increase your risk for chronic diseases like diabetes. Indigenous foods are nutrient dense, contain healthy fats and can help to prevent chronic disease. Alaskan Native People have protected the foods that they value which in turn protects the environment.



A smile is a curve that sets everything straight. — Phyllis Diller. Protect that smile with daily care found on page 2. Photo credit: ANTHC

Oral Health

Living well with diabetes means taking care of your oral health. Here's a quick look at the most common problems, how they can arise and the daily care that promotes oral health.

Gingivitis and periodontitis

Gingivitis refers to gum inflammation – it usually precedes the development of periodontitis (bone loss). Almost 1/4 of people living with diabetes have some measure of periodontitis. This is because the high blood sugars characteristic of diabetes prevent the immune system from working as it should. Another result of high blood sugar is that it causes blood vessels to thicken. This interrupts the healthy removal of waste. Also, bacteria thrive on the increased amount of sugar in saliva, so they multiply more quickly in the mouth. Smoking affects the blood circulation and can negatively affect our gums and tissues. Early warning signs of gum disease include bad breath, a bad taste in the mouth and bleeding gums. While gingivitis is reversible, periodontitis is not. Periodontitis is permanent loss of the attachment around the tooth. It can be stable, but is not reversible.

Dry mouth

Studies suggest that many people living with diabetes have lower salivary flow. This condition is called **xerostomia**. Xerostomia gets significantly worse as blood sugar levels rise. It may also result as a side effect of many medications, including some of those used to treat diabetes.

Tooth decay

Eating a healthy diet not only protects your health it helps protect your teeth. Poor blood circulation reduces the body's ability to care for the teeth, resulting in cavities and decay. Make sure to brush with a fluoride toothpaste twice a day and see your dental provider on a routine basis.

Thrush

Thrush is a yeast infection, caused by a fungus named *candida*. Small amounts of *candida* are normally found in the mouth. The large amounts of sugar in the saliva, however, allow *candida* to grow more quickly, causing problems that a weakened immune system is not as good at fighting off. Thrush can cause dry mouth, discomfort, and pain. It can affect the tongue, cheeks, roof of the mouth, or the lips. It may result in white patches or spots.

People living with diabetes who smoke are up to 20 times more likely than non-smokers to develop thrush and periodontal disease.

Antibiotics can also increase the risk of developing a yeast infection.

Poor healing of sores and cuts

High blood sugars inhibit the ability of the body's immune system to fight off viruses and bacteria. Thus, for the person living with diabetes, all infections (including those in the mouth) are slower to heal. Smoking can also delay wound healing.



Photo credit:
Google images

Daily Oral Care

- Examine gums for red, puffy, swollen gums and take note if brushing or flossing causes bleeding.
- Track and record blood sugar levels. Talk to your provider to determine the optimal blood sugar range.
- Get into a good routine both morning and evening to brush and floss. This will scrape and wash away harmful bacteria and fungi. If you wear dentures, clean them as often as you've been advised.

Additional Oral Care

- Limit sweets. In addition to raising blood sugar levels, sugary foods and drinks create plaque build-up and cause tooth decay.
- Avoid smoking. Contact the smoking cessation program for help in quitting.
- People who have been newly diagnosed with diabetes should have a dental exam soon after diagnosis and then at least annually. Studies show that visiting the dentist regularly may actually improve blood sugar control!

Fabulous Pantry Find

Your pantry may be hiding a golden treat for a wintry day. Wait for it... sweet potatoes!



The bright color of the sweet potato tells you that it is just bursting with **carotenoids** and other **antioxidants**. These are nutrients that help reduce our risk of developing certain cancers (cervical, ovarian, colorectal, prostate and breast cancer), cardiovascular disease, bone, skin, or eye disorders. Humans cannot synthesize carotenoids, so we have to get them from our food.

Fresh sweet potatoes can be stored in the pantry for about 3 to 5 weeks. Storing in the fridge or freezer can extend that, but will also change the taste of the sweet potato. This makes canned sweet potatoes the ideal choice in Alaska. A 2/3 cup of canned sweet potatoes provides 230% of the percent daily value for Vitamin A and 30% of the percent daily value for Vitamin C; see discussion box below the recipe.

People living with diabetes can use canned whole or sliced sweet potatoes even though the vegetable is packed in sugar because that sugar can be removed by rinsing the pieces in water. Whole pieces of sweet potato don't absorb sugar, it stays on the surface. The sugar is there as a preservative, believe it or not, not to make the potatoes sweeter. Commercial canners could use salt but then that would clash with the flavor of the potatoes. A little bit of sugar remains but it is a very small amount. On the other hand, there is no way to get rid of the sugar in canned sweet potato mash.



Photo credit: Google Images

Here is a flavorful sweet potato recipe for a busy week night.

Ingredient

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive or vegetable oil

1 medium-large sweet potato, peeled and diced or 2/3 cup canned sweet potato, rinsed

1 large onion, diced

4 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons chili powder

4 teaspoons ground cumin

1/2 teaspoon ground chipotle chile (see Note)

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 1/2 cups water

2 15-ounce cans black beans, rinsed

1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes

4 teaspoons lime juice (optional)

1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro (optional)

Sweet Potato & Black Bean Chili

Adapted from EatingWell.com

Makes 4 servings

Preparation

1. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook, stirring often, until the onion is beginning to soften, about 4 minutes. (See Note)
2. Add garlic, chili powder, cumin, chipotle and salt and cook, stirring constantly, for 30 seconds.
3. Add water and bring to a simmer. Cover, reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook until the sweet potato is tender, 10 to 12 minutes.

Notes:

- Chipotle peppers are dried, smoked jalapeno peppers. Ground chipotle chile pepper can be found in the spice section at the grocery store.
- Fresh sweet potatoes can be added in step one and cooked along with the onions. Canned sweet potatoes can be added in step two.

What is Daily Value and Percent Daily Value? The Daily Value (DV) and Percent Daily Value (%DV) are stated on the Nutrition Fact label for packaged foods. DVs are the recommended amounts of nutrients to consume or not to exceed each day. The %DV is how much a nutrient in a single serving of an individual packaged food or dietary supplement contributes to your daily diet. For example, if the DV for a certain nutrient is 300 micrograms (mcg) and a packaged food has 30 mcg in one serving, the %DV for that nutrient in a serving of the food would be 10%. If you ate one serving of the food, you would have met 10% of your need for that nutrient in a day and could consume other foods to get the other 90%.

Drink one more glass of water

Water keeps every system in the body working as they should. The body uses water to:

- Carry nutrients and oxygen to cells
- Flush bacteria from the bladder
- Aid in digestion
- Prevent constipation
- Normalize blood pressure
- Stabilize the heart beat
- Cushion joints
- Regulate body temperature
- Maintain electrolyte (sodium) balance



Photo credit: Wellness Strategies for Health Program, Alaska Native Epidemiology Center

Drinking water is the easiest way to stay hydrated. The daily four-to-six cup rule is for generally healthy people. More water is needed if you're exercising and sweating heavily. People with health conditions and/or on medications should check with their doctor to individualize their water intake. Remember too that all beverages containing water contribute toward daily needs. While caffeinated beverages make you urinate, over the course of the day the water from these beverages still leads to a net positive contribution to total fluid consumption. Water rich foods — such as salads, fruit and applesauce — also count toward total fluid consumption.

Consider trying some new practices to better meet your body's water needs. Drinking from a reusable water bottle helps you easily drink water in any setting and may make you more aware of the amounts you're drinking. Drinking one glass of water before each meal is another habit that helps you stay hydrated.

Words Matter

Words shape how individuals think, feel, and behave toward others. People-first language (PFL) is a way of speaking and writing that reflects knowledge and respect for people who live with a disease or disability; emphasizing that a person is not defined by that disease or disability.

PFL should be used when talking to patients about their weight. In a recent research study, people reported that they preferred that health providers use the terms "weight", "unhealthy weight", or "weight problem". Patients found those words more motivating for weight loss and less stigmatizing than words like "obese", or "extremely obese".

PFL can help to start a discussion about the topic of weight. Additional skills, such as motivational interviewing, are also helpful. The topic of weight will always be a sensitive issue, but a frank discussion of weight struggles starting with PFL can lead to improved patient care.

Beating the Exercise Slump

Fight pandemic fatigue and anxiety with exercise. It may be simpler than you think. Here are a few options.

- Remind yourself that some exercise is better than none. If all you have is five minutes then use it!
- Cut back on intensity; maybe go for a walk instead of starting a boot camp.
- Move a little every day — dance around to some good music.
- Stand and move in between extended periods of sitting or laying down.
- Get your head in the game. This way a short workout becomes an energy booster, much like a physical cup of coffee. Stretching in front of your computer screen releases stress. It creates a sense of space in your head and a buzz in your body.

Physical movement is not just about burning calories and feeling pain. It can help you to feel joy!

Virtual Learning Opportunity For CHA/Ps!

Teresa Hicks is teaching a new course: Virtual Diabetes Education for Health Aides. The upcoming dates are April 21, 26, 28, May 3, 5, 10 and 12. There are 7, one hour classes in the course. There are two classes a week.

Email tahicks@anthc.org to register or with questions.

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CE Quiz and Evaluation Form



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- Answer the CE quiz questions and complete the CE evaluation form.
- Return both to the ANTHC Diabetes Program for **1.0 CHAP CE credit**.
- **Both are required for CE credit.**
- Email to: jpstepetin@anthc.org, Fax to: (907) 729-1129 or
Mail to:

COB Diabetes
4000 Ambassador Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508

Print clearly and provide a complete mailing address to receive your CE certificate.

Name & CHA/P Level: _____

Address: _____

Choose only ONE answer for each question

1. Which of these could lead to overeating and weight gain?

- A. Eating while driving
- B. Eating while working
- C. Eating while watching TV
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

2. True or False: Mindfulness is an intentional focus of one's thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations in the present moment.

3. The benefits of eating traditional foods includes?

- A. Nutrient dense
- B. Contains no fat
- C. Helps prevent chronic disease
- D. A & C
- E. None of the above

4. True or False: High amounts of sugar in saliva will cause bacteria to multiply more quickly in the mouth

5. The number of people living with diabetes that have some measure of periodontitis?

- A. 1/4
- B. 1/2
- C. 3/4

6. True or False: People living with diabetes who smoke are up to 20 times more likely than non-smokers to develop thrush and periodontal disease.

7. True or False: People who have been newly diagnosed with diabetes should have a dental exam soon after diagnosis and then at least annually.

8. **Sweet potatoes contain?**

- A. Laptinoids
- B. Carotenoids
- C. Plantinoids

9. **True or False:** People with health conditions and/or on medications should check with their doctor to individualize their water intake.

10. **People prefer health providers use terms such as _____ to discuss a person's weight**

- A. Obese
- B. Extremely obese
- C. Unhealthy weight

Evaluation: Learner Directed Activity

1. Please rate the effectiveness of this continuing education activity.

Objective Achieved	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Describes mindful eating practices to reduce anxiety, overeating and weight gain.				
Reviews daily and annual oral care to prevent complications of diabetes such as gingivitis and periodontitis.				
Encourages use of canned vegetables to increase intake of antioxidants. Explores the meaning of Daily Value (DV) and % DV found on the Nutrition Facts label.				
Provides ideas to increase water intake and exercise.				
Introduces and encourages the use of People First Language in the discussion of weight.				

2. Was the information presented in a fair, balanced, bias-free manner? Yes No
 Comments:

3. Based on what you have learned in this activity, in what area of your practice (if any) do you see a need for change?

4. How do you plan to use this information to improve your practice or practice setting?

5. General comments and/or suggestions for future newsletters:



Alaska Native Diabetes Program

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