



November 2020



As November, which is Diabetes Awareness month, draws to a close we would like to remind everyone of the importance of good nutrition and healthy lifestyles to prevent and manage diabetes.

According to the International Diabetes Federation, the number of adults diagnosed with diabetes in South Africa has skyrocketed 137% since 2017. Even more alarming is the number of people who are undiagnosed, living blissfully unaware, while diabetes remains in hiding. The limited data suggest that there upwards of 2.394 million people with undiagnosed diabetes.

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 keep blood glucose under control, the more likely that outcome will be.

Making certain lifestyle changes is key to controlling diabetes. Below, we offer some important tips and strategies prepared by Health in Action Programme Manager Dr Sandra Pretorius. May they help set you on the pathway to good health.

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Director of Programmes, INMED South Africa

Tips & Strategies for Healthy Living with Diabetes

The good news about diabetes is that with awareness and proper attention, you can live a normal, productive life. The key is to take charge of the disease before it takes charge of you. Here are some ways you can do just that:



1. Eat healthfully

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. Eating three balanced meals per day with healthy snacks in between is preferable. If possible, consume the greater portion of kilojoules during the morning and midday, leaving a lighter meal at the end of the day. If you have your main meal in the evening, eat it early evening.

This way, energy intake is proportional to natural energy expenditure and therefore, improved energy balance.^t

Also remember:

- Eating healthy snacks in between meals helps to control blood glucose levels throughout the day and to maintain energy levels, keeping you satiated for longer.
- Eat at least 5 portions of fresh fruit and vegetables per day. You can eat a variety of whatever is in season to achieve an optimum intake of fibre, 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 in your diet.
- Limit your intake of salt by preparing meals from scratch and using herbs (fresh/dry) and spices when cooking.



2. Remain active

If you are not active now, it's time to start. You don't have to join a gym and do cross-training; walking, riding a bike or working in the garden are also great exercise. 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 diabetes by bringing down your blood sugar. It also lowers your chances of getting heart disease. Plus, you may lose extra pounds and ease stress.



3. Visit your doctor or clinic

Diabetes raises your odds of heart disease. So, learn your numbers: cholesterol, blood pressure, and A1c (average blood sugar over 3 months).

Regular visits to your doctor or clinic are important ways you can prevent negative impacts from uncontrolled diabetes. Get a full eye exam every year. Visit a foot doctor to check for foot problems, such as ulcers and nerve damage.^{ce}

4. Practice mindfulness and manage stress

When you are 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. If this sounds like you, find ways to relieve stress through deep breathing, yoga, gardening or hobbies that you find relaxing.



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 chances of getting these problems is even higher. Smoking also can make it harder to exercise. So, it is very important to stop smoking, not only to avoid worsening the effects of diabetes but also for your overall health if you're not diabetic.



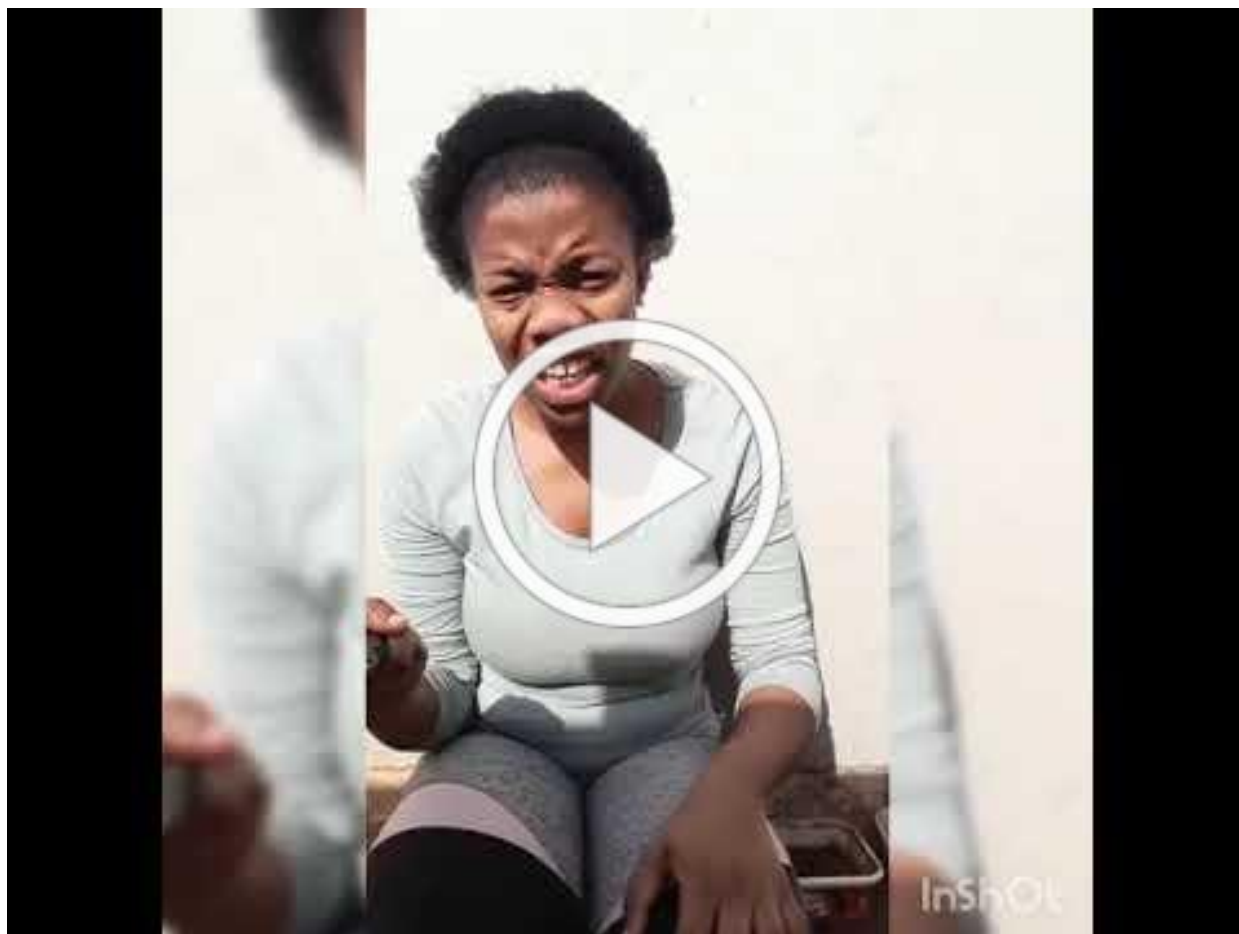
6. Limit your alcohol intake

It is easier to control your blood sugar if you don't consume 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 medicine 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. While diabetes management can seem like a burden, there are many ways to transform it into a therapeutic and even fun activity and by introducing a healthy balanced diabetic eating plan you will be able to better manage your glucose and even stress levels.

CLICK HERE for more helpful tips and recipes.

Plant a Backyard Garden to Eat More Fresh Veg



CLICK HERE to watch step-by-step videos from our gardeners at INMED South Africa.

Planting a backyard garden is a great way to ensure a steady supply of fresh fruits and vegetables for your diet. You don't need a lot of space or even a green thumb.

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.**



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Help us facilitate 2,500 backyard gardens for families going hungry in Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth. For as little as R110, you can provide seeds and training for 1 family via our Seeds for Life campaign.

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