

A woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a red dress with a blue floral pattern, is smiling and looking down at a piece of food on a white plate. She is in a kitchen setting with white shelves holding mugs and a green plant in the background. The food on the plate appears to be a piece of fish or meat with a white sauce and garnishes. The overall scene is bright and cheerful.

DIABETES PREVENTION

HEALTHY
DIET.

BECAUSE HEALTH
IS EVERYTHING

SWICA

Diabetes Prevention: Healthy diet.

Why is a healthy diet so important?

A healthy diet is important because eating the right food will keep you in good health and prevent illness now and in the future.

Which foods are particularly good for you?

- Fruit and vegetables, which can help prevent heart disease and stroke. Fruit and vegetables may also help prevent certain types of cancer. Try to eat fruit and vegetables at mealtimes and whenever you feel like a snack. If you do not have access to fresh food products, you can use deep-frozen or tinned foods instead. Doctors recommend that you should eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day.
- High-fibre foods, because fibre helps prevent heart disease and stroke and can regulate blood sugar levels positively in the case of prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. The following foods contain a lot of fibre: vegetables, fruit, beans, nuts, oats, some types of bread and breakfast cereals. The nutritional data which is printed on foodstuff packaging lists the fibre content. Doctors recommend that you eat 20-35 grams of fibre every day.
- Some experts recommend a so-called “Mediterranean diet” which consists principally of fruit, vegetables, whole grain products and olive oil, some fish and poultry, and small quantities of red meat. The Mediterranean diet can boost your health in a general way and may even reduce your risk of suffering a stroke.

What types of food should one avoid or cut back on?

Eating a healthy diet means avoiding or cutting back on some types of food.

These include:

Fats

There are various kinds of fats. Some of them are better for you than others. So-called “trans fats” are especially bad for you. They can be found in margarines, many fast food products and some supermarket baked goods. Trans fats can raise cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease. Foods which contain trans fats should be avoided whenever possible.

On the other hand, the polyunsaturated fats which are found in fish seem to be good for the body and can reduce the risk of heart disease. Polyunsaturated fats from other food sources also appear to be good for us. In the past the general opinion was that saturated fats were bad for your health. However, more recent studies indicate that the risk of heart disease is not increased simply through the consumption of saturated fats.

Whenever possible, healthy oils (e.g. olive oil, rapeseed oil) should be used for cooking.

Sugar

Eating a healthy diet means cutting back on or completely avoiding sugar, sweets and milled cereals. Milled cereals are found in white bread, white rice, most types of pasta and, most frequently, in pre-packed snacks. Whole grain products such as wholemeal bread and brown rice contain more fibre and are better for your health. Another way to boost your health is to avoid sweetened drinks such as iced tea, lemonade, cola and sports drinks.

Red meat

Studies have shown that eating red meat can lead to an increased risk of certain health problems, including heart disease and cancer.

What about alcohol?

People who consume a small amount of red wine every day seem to have a reduced risk of heart disease. However, alcohol can cause other illnesses. The risk of liver disease and particular forms of cancer can rise. Alcohol also has a negative impact on fat and blood sugar levels in individuals who are overweight or suffer from prediabetes or type 2 diabetes.

How many calories do I need per day?

How many calories you need depends on your weight, age and gender and on how many calories you burn at work and in your leisure time. Your doctor or nutritionist can tell you how many calories you should consume per day. If you want to lose weight and keep your weight down permanently, you should not go on a crash diet. Instead you should keep below the specified calorie level over the long term or burn more calories through physical exercise. You can best achieve this by gradually changing your diet and integrating a little more exercise into your everyday routine.

Losing five to ten percent of your body weight can help prevent or significantly delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

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Who should I turn to if I have questions?

If you have questions about nutrition, you should contact your doctor or nutritionist. The diet that is right for you also partially depends on the state of your health and any complaints you may suffer from. Depending on your questions and objectives, it may make sense to consult a professional nutritional advice service or go on a specific programme. As a SWICA customer, you can also contact the medical staff or nutrition specialists at santé24 if you require further assistance.