

# Food Burnout

Managing diabetes is hard and overwhelming. It's like a second job where you have to keep track of your blood sugar, follow a healthy "clean" diet that restricts you in terms of food and drink choices, inject yourself with insulin, and take other medications in a timely manner.

When all of this is overwhelming and feels like a burden, most people develop diabetes distress. They will often feel frustrated, angered, and burnt out. Such individuals are likely to forget to take their medication in a timely manner, miss doctor's appointments, refuse to monitor their blood glucose levels, and more importantly, neglect their diet thus neglecting self-care which is essential for the management of the disease.

Food burnout is common for everyone who is following a diet, diabetic or not. This is because when we diet, we tend to cut out sugary foods, a wide range of carbohydrates, and eat more proteins and fruits. We're then left with this recurring diet circle based on our budget, food availability, doctor's advice, etc.

And when we do this, we tend to deprive our bodies of essential nutrients that are needed for the organs to perform their functions. Our bodies naturally fight back by increasing hunger, stress, and fat storage hormones making us overeat, and thus frustrate our weight loss or diabetic management goals.

Whereas non-diabetics can easily revert to their normal eating habits, there's no shortcut for folks with diabetes since a healthy diet is essential in managing and possibly reversing type 2 diabetes.

But healthy doesn't mean deprivation. It simply means having a meal plan naturally rich in essential nutrients, low in fat and calories. It's a diet rich in vegetables, whole-grain carbohydrates, healthy proteins, and fruits. Your doctor may recommend cutting out certain foods but make sure you get the required nutrients daily.

And so, what if you crave sugary food and you're diabetic? What if you get tired of following a specific diet plan?

## Here's how you can cope with food burnout.

- 1) It's all in your mind. You know taking soda and other sugary foods will spike your blood sugar levels. You need to make peace with the fact that you have an underlying condition that restricts certain foods and drinks.
- 2) Learn how to stick to your diet. Your doctor/nutritionist will guide you on food choices. Before getting started with the diet, try to learn how to withstand cravings, how to motivate yourself, and have clearly laid down reasons why you're following the diet. Read these reasons during your vulnerable moments to help get yourself back on track.
- 3) Stay Accountable. If possible, network and get yourself an accountability partner. Keep each other accountable daily via your preferred means of communication.
- 4) Broaden your food variety. Enjoy a tasty balanced meal amongst the options you have. Try increasing a variety of vegetables, wholegrain cereals, etc. Sometimes this might mean trying new foods or different recipes. Don't forget to watch the calories though.
- 5) Avoid emotional eating. Pay attention to your feelings. Bad eating habits often revolve around stress, joyous moments, comfort, etc. Tame your stress, temptations, cravings. Have a food diary if you must and set mealtimes to determine natural hunger.
- 6) Talk to your doctor. Let him/her know what you are feeling or going through. He/she will reason out with you and advise on what to do.
- 7) Plan your meals in advance. Figure out what you want and shop in advance, say for a week. This means by the time you're meal prepping, you'll already have a range of options to choose from.

A balanced diet and physical activity are key in managing type two diabetes. Try the above tips till healthy meals become a lifestyle that will transform your relationship with food in the best possible way.