

CHICHESTER OBSERVER

MARIA GRIFFITHS LIFESTYLE COLUMN

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Dear Maria, since being told that I have Type 2 Diabetes, I have tried various diets without much joy. Now I am concerned. How can nutrition help?

I won't go into the difference between Type 1 and type two diabetes, but need to say that both are a disorder of carbohydrate metabolism in which sugars in the body are not oxidised to produce energy due to lack of pancreatic hormone Insulin. Type 2 usually occurs in adulthood after years of insufficient attention to the body's dietary needs. Easy to say in hind sight! The pancreas has been producing just about enough insulin to get by until the day comes when, stuck in the same dietary routine; the amount of insulin produced is inadequate. Now the diet must be carefully controlled with adequate carbohydrates for the body's needs.

How much do we need? Firstly we must understand that sugars are simple carbs, starches are complex carbs and fibre are all carbohydrates. With Diabetes, we need very little sugar itself, what we should have is sugar bound in starch and fibre. So whole fruit rather than fruit juice, fresh/frozen vegetables, neither tinned, nuts, seeds, whole grains including brown red even wild rice, giving a sustained release of energy from meal to meal. Pulses including lentils are a great source of protein and an excellent blood sugar leveller.

It is important is to have some protein with every meal. This helps to support and balance blood sugar levels through the release of hormone glucagon. Protein can be of animal or vegetable source. Cheese tends to be fattening, so cottage cheese is a tasty substitute. Now fish, great source of protein. Mackerel and salmon both great sources of omega 3 fatty acids. Knowing this should help you.

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