

## Diabetes and Diet

In Australia, one person develops diabetes every five minutes – but diet can help prevent this!

### Are there different types of Diabetes?

- Yes – there are three types of diabetes: Diabetes I and II and Gestational Diabetes.
- Diabetes I is an autoimmune disease that is managed by injections of insulin.
- Gestational Diabetes is a form of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy.
- The diabetes we're talking about today is Diabetes II: a progressive disease where the body becomes resistant to insulin or stops producing enough of it.

### What exactly does "insulin resistant" mean?

- Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas to control the level of sugar, or glucose, in the blood. This is known as the blood glucose level. When the blood glucose level increases, say after a meal, the insulin is released to tell the body's cells to take up the sugar to use for energy.
- If the body's cells become insulin resistant, more insulin is needed to make them respond. If the pancreas can't produce enough insulin, the blood glucose level starts to rise. When it stays high, even well after a meal, it is known as Diabetes II.

### What causes insulin resistance?

- There are many causes but the most common one seen in Australia today is being overweight.

### Why is diet important in preventing diabetes?

- The secretion of insulin is dependent on what you eat. Foods that break down quickly such as fruit juice, jasmine rice, white bread and sugar quickly raise the blood glucose level. This means a large amount of insulin must be quickly released to bring it down. If you eat a lot of these foods, large amounts of insulin are released often, the body becomes tolerant of it so more and more insulin is needed to stimulate the body's cells.

### So, what foods should you eat to reduce the risk of insulin resistance?

- It is important that the foods eaten are slowly absorbed, have a good mixture of vitamins and minerals (especially magnesium, calcium, potassium), are rich in fibre and nourish the gut flora. Some of the foods recommended are:
  - Non-starchy vegetables such as broccoli, leafy greens, green beans and asparagus
  - Whole grains such as oats, quinoa and barley
  - High fibre food such as bean, lentils and seeds
  - Lean proteins such as lean meat, fish, soy, legumes and nuts
  - Food rich in omega-3 such as salmon and sardines
  - Fermented food such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kombucha
  - Unsweetened dairy such as plain yoghurt
  - Water or unsweetened tea.

### What food should you avoid?

- The foods to avoid are either digested quickly or have high sugar content. These include:
  - Anything sweetened such as fruit juice, soft drink, cakes, deserts
  - Alcohol
  - Starchy vegetables like potato, corn and pumpkin
  - Refined grains like white bread, white rice and pasta
  - Fried food or food high in saturated fat including butter and chocolate
  - Cow's milk contains the sugar lactose – drink only in small amounts (i.e. no lattes!).