

Adopt a diabetic diet... and love it

Being diagnosed as a diabetic saved Peter's life. Now five years later - and 20 kgs lighter - **Peter Howard** shares how we can all benefit from following a diabetic diet.

Fats...sugars...salts...we adore them and the palate is so addicted to them as well. So ridding yourself of them is difficult – very very difficult. At least using these three indulged ingredients to a very minimum is the aim when you're a person suffering diabetes.

Me, I was addicted to take away foods with fats, salts and sugars... and deep fried...YUM! Well, that was the old me and now I rarely, if ever, make my palate (and waist line) suffer with take away junk anymore. It has become so easy to hand over the responsibility of feeding yourself to someone else and that has certainly taken its toll as we look at the obesity avalanche that has devoured our population.

My saviour, in a funny ironical way, was that I was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes five years ago and during that time I have shed the 20 kgs that was needed to go and also adapted an eating regime that will allow me to keep it off.

Did I loose it quickly? No. It took two years to divest myself of the overload that I carried that made my knees ache – and so on it went. I tried low GI foods and it was those food types that I swear by...good fibrous and tasty produce and products that keep

me going longer and sustain my energy. Professor Jennie Brand-Miller's team and their publications are an absolute necessity to read and learn about how easy it is to eat well.

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How do I eat now? – I rarely, if ever, add salt or sugar to anything. There is so much naturally occurring sodium and added sodium in manufactured goods – and the natural flavour you have in our produce is stunning. Adding salt is habitual to say the least – look at the number of people that add salt before they have tasted the morsels they're about to eat. Careful appraisal of the nutritional panels on packaged supermarket items is a must.

Daily eating is always balanced meals and ALWAYS BREAKFAST! How often has it been said that it is the most important meal of the day – baked beans on toasted bread, real porridge with stewed prunes or fresh fruit – a banana. A favourite is oven-baked eggs on baked beans ...or orange infused scrambled eggs made using a film of spray olive oil in a non-stick pan. Where's the butter? I love it but it is a luxury these days so no butter for cooking or on the toast. Funnily enough, you really don't miss using butter on toast if you use good tasty and moist breads like the Burgin range.

Making the decisions on what to eat depends on your lifestyle too – mine incorporates a lot of travel and I now travel out of meal times if possible and eat before I get on a plane – airports are a disaster for me to find the foods I love. Each meal is properly balanced with a protein and vegetables or salads. And I have become so used to a squeeze of orange or lemon juice over the salad leaves plus a good grind of pepper – generally no oil and if so, I use Australian olive oil mostly. I try to have only one big meal a day and that is eaten depending on where I am and what is happening...we are all the same as we all lead crazily busy lives now. We do use that as an excuse and it really is a matter of



Peter Howard now loves to cook... "it really is so easy to eat well".

planning your days eating and being excited about what you will consume.

Desserts? Love them and I have developed a real love of fresh fruits. I can substitute most dessert desires with a piece of fruit or some dried fruits and nuts – almonds are always in my pantry...and walnuts too. If the chocolate cravings get me, I have some that is applicable – the 70% bitter chocolates are fine for me and they come in small packages, which mean I physiologically am satisfied too.

Do I fall off the wagon? You bet I do and being tired is the danger time – so proper rest and daily exercise is not a choice – it is crucial. How many times can we make excuses for not exercising? I don't beat myself up when I lapse into one of my old habits of eating junk but I do warn myself about it happening regularly.

I guess the thing I have learned about eating and controlling my weight (which means I am on no medication for my diabetes at all) is to be able to say no

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when you have to. Discipline is a must and for a glass of wine? Well, for me, I adore a glass or two a day (not the two bottles I used to love). One or two dry days a week is also very good for me.

In this country with its extraordinary range of all fresh produce, it really is so easy to eat well and be aware of what we put into the temple that is our body. Eating a well-balanced meal when we do is a matter of knowing what we can eat and enjoying it to the max! ♥



Try one of Peter Howard's recipes... from his best selling book, **Delicious Living**, published by New Holland Publishers RRP \$19.95.