

The Norwood diet

This is the diet sheet given out by GPs at the Norwood surgery in Greater Manchester to patients who want to lose weight and treat type 2 diabetes. This approach has been very successful as reported in several scientific journals. This version of the diet sheet was published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health in July 2019.

A lower carb diet for type 2 diabetes

In this condition your metabolism struggles to deal with sugar, so its consumption needs cutting back dramatically.

Sugar – cut it out altogether, although it will be in the blueberries, strawberries and raspberries you are allowed to eat. Cakes and biscuits are a mixture of sugar and starch that makes it almost impossible to avoid food cravings: they just make you hungrier!!

Reduce starchy carbs a lot. Remember, they digest down into surprising amounts of sugar. If possible, just cut out the ‘white stuff’ like bread, pasta, rice, crackers and breakfast cereals.

All green veg/salads are fine – eat as much of these as you can. Turn the white stuff green. So that you still eat a good big dinner, try substituting veg such as broccoli, courgettes or green beans for your mash, pasta or rice – still covering them with your gravy, Bolognese or curry! Tip: Try home-made soup. It can be taken to work for lunch and microwaved. Mushrooms, tomatoes and onions can be included in this.

Fruit is trickier... Some tropical fruits like bananas, oranges, grapes, mangoes or pineapple have too much sugar in and can set those carb cravings off. Berries are better, and apples and pears too.

Eat healthy proteins such as non-processed meat, eggs (three eggs a day is not too much), fish – particularly oily fish such as salmon, mackerel or sardines – are fine and can be eaten freely. Plain, full fat yoghurt (Greek) makes a good breakfast with the berries (and seeds). Processed meats such as bacon, ham, sausage or salami are not as healthy and should only be eaten in moderation.

Fats are fine in moderation. Yes, fats can be fine in moderation. Olive oil is very useful, butter may be tastier than margarine and could be better for you! Coconut oil is great for stir fries. Four essential vitamins (A, D, E and K) are only found in some fats or oils. Please avoid margarine, corn oil and vegetable oil (eg seed oils such as sunflower).

Beware ‘low fat’ foods. They often have sugar or sweeteners added to make them palatable. Full fat mayonnaise and pesto are definitely on!!

Cheese only in moderation. It’s a very calorific mixture of fat and protein.

Snacks: avoid, as they are habit-forming. But un-salted nuts such as almonds or walnuts are ok to stave off hunger. The occasional treat of strong dark chocolate (70% cocoa or more) in small quantities is allowed.

Eating lots of green veg with protein and healthy fats leaves you properly full in a way that lasts.

Alcohol is full of carbs: Sadly many alcoholic drinks are full of carbohydrate – for example, beer is almost ‘liquid bread’ hence the beer belly. The odd glass of dry white or red wine or spirits is not too bad if it doesn’t make you hungry afterwards. Plain water with a slice of lemon.

Sweeteners can trick you. Finally, about sweeteners and what to drink. Sweeteners have been proven to tease your brain into being even hungrier, making weight loss more difficult. Drink tea, coffee and water or herbal tea. (100ml milk is 1 teaspoon of sugar.)

PS some folk need more salt on a low carb diet.