

DIETRY GUIDELINES

The first stage of the DBC programme aims to balance blood sugar levels. This is a crucial first step as it will help to reduce cravings, increase energy levels and balance mood. Research shows that it generally takes approximately three weeks to achieve this.

The foods you are advised to eat on this programme are all low in the Glycaemic Index (GI). This means that the sugars in the food are absorbed into the bloodstream slowly. This will avoid any dramatic fluctuations in your blood sugar levels, thereby ensuring steadier energy and hunger levels.

These dietary guidelines are not intended to form the basis of a prescriptive or rigid eating plan, but rather highlights the foods that should form the basis of your diet. No foods are forbidden, however close adherence to the following guidelines will ensure blood sugar levels are balanced rapidly.

Making significant changes to your eating pattern will initially require time and effort. The commitment to making these changes will over time result in higher energy levels, reduced cravings, and an increased sense of control over the foods you eat.



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Increase consumption of vegetables

Try to increase the proportion of vegetables included within your dietary plan. Examples are listed below, but this is by no means exhaustive. Moderate consumption of potatoes and parsnips is advisable as these are higher on the GI scale.

All salad and vegetables

Artichoke	Celeriac
Asparagus	Green Beans
Aubergine	Leeks
Beetroot	Mange tout
Broccoli	Marrow
Brussell sprouts	Okra
Cabbage	Onion
Cauliflower	Peas
Courgettes	Spinach
Carrots	Turnip

Try to include a portion of vegetables or salad with all meals. Steaming is preferable where possible. Over time your tastes will adjust to enable you to enjoy different foods. It takes approximately 21 days for your tastes to adjust.

Simplify your diet

The more processed the food (i.e. the further a food is removed from its natural state), the fewer nutrients it contains and the harder it will be to digest.

Limit your intake of ready meals, or have only very occasionally

Ready meals are very high in salt and additives and provide minimal nutritional value.

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Vary the vegetables you consume

Aim to consume a wide variety of colours in the food you eat – these will provide different nutritional benefits. e.g. tomatoes (good for lycopene) particularly when cooked; carrots (high in beta carotene); dark green vegetables (high in iron/folic acid/calcium). Include a good source of protein with most meals

Include protein with each meal

Protein foods include all meats, fish, eggs and tofu. Protein will help you to feel satisfied and is a low GI food group. Many cuts of meat will contain high levels of hormones and other chemicals that your body will need to process so where possible choose organic meat. Where organic meat is not available or too expensive, ensure the meat you buy is of good quality.

Beans and Pulses: Low GI, high in fibre

Chickpeas
Kidney beans
Flagelot beans
Black eye beans
Butter beans
Haricot beans
Soya beans
Lentils

Beans can be added to vegetable stews, tomato based sauces, soups etc.. They can also be cooked with tomatoes, onion and garlic for a nutritious, low GI meal. Sprouted beans are highly nutritious. These are inexpensive and can be purchased from the chilled cabinet in most health food shops.

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Dairy

Cheese contains a high percentage of saturated fat, so ensure that you are sparing with your servings. There is generally approximately 380-400 calories per 100 grams of cheese. Although it is not necessary to weigh the cheese you consume, be aware of your portion sizes. The same applies to butter. Where possible replace butter with olive oil as this will give the same satisfying taste associated with oils/fat but will also provide the health benefits associated with olive oil.

Optional: If you find cow's milk/cheese difficult to digest, replace with goats milk/cheese. This is easier to digest and differs little in taste.

Sugar

In order to stabilise your blood sugar levels it is necessary to minimise your intake of carbohydrates that lead to a sharp rise in blood sugar levels (e.g. sugar, white flour, white bread, white pasta, white rice, pastry products).

The body responds to these high GI (glycaemic index) foods by releasing high levels of insulin into the blood stream in an attempt to bring blood sugar levels down again. As blood sugar levels drop in response to the insulin, you are likely to crave sugary or high GI foods to bring blood sugar levels up once again. This is the typical pattern of fluctuating blood sugar levels that many people experience.

Low blood sugar levels are associated with cravings, reduced energy, poor levels of concentration, lowered mood and irritability. In order to stabilise blood sugar levels it is necessary to consume low GI foods (e.g. protein, all vegetables with the exception of potatoes, whole grains and pulses). Your eating patterns will be looked at in detail throughout the programme to ensure that your food choices are working to help balance your blood sugar levels.

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Sweet snack suggestions

There are times when you will fancy something sweet. It is fine to have something that satisfies you, but there are nutritious choices that you can make that will also keep blood sugar levels on an even keel. As you consume fewer sweet foods, your taste buds will adjust, and foods you previously found too bitter will taste sweeter (the same applies to salty foods).

It takes approximately 21 days for your taste buds to adjust.

If you feel like something sweet, the below suggestions are healthy options.

- Oat cakes with a little reduced-sugar jam
- 30g nuts (unsalted and unroasted)
- Live natural yoghurt sprinkled with a handful of nuts and a teaspoon of fructooligosaccharides*
- Live natural yoghurt with a teaspoon of low sugar jam
- Cup of cocoa made with half milk/half water and xylitol or stevia to sweeten

** Fructooligosaccharide is a prebiotic (i.e. they encourage the growth of friendly bacteria in the intestinal tract). It is a sweet powder which does not affect blood sugar levels, but it does need to be taken in moderation. Start by taking 1 teaspoon a day, as it can cause bloating until your system becomes more accustomed to it. It can help to maintain intestinal flora and maintain bowel regularity. You can purchase fructooligosaccharide powder from most good health shops or direct from Biocare (tel. 0121 433 3727).*

There may be times when you particularly feel like some chocolate. On these occasions it is preferable to select good quality chocolate with a minimum of 70% cocoa content as this will have some health benefits and is lower in sugar. If sweet foods are triggering episodes of overeating it may be easier to cut them out altogether initially.

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Calorie intake

If you are attempting to lose weight, you will need to reduce your calorie intake. Be aware of the foods that are very high in calories so that you can make sensible and informed decisions. LISTEN to your body. Respond to hunger and try to be aware of when you are satisfied.

It is overall calorie intake that will make a difference. Guilt associated with eating certain foods is unhelpful. There are no forbidden foods on this programme; there are sensible choices. There are times when you may decide to consume a food simply because you fancy it, even if it is not healthy or nutritious. There is nothing wrong with this. Try to enjoy the food you eat, eat in moderation, listen to your body and respond to satiation signals, and avoid feeling guilty after eating the food.

Alcohol

Drink in moderation. Ensure that you have days that you do not consume alcohol. Alcohol will impact upon blood sugar levels leading to dips in energy and exacerbation of cravings. It is recommended that you do not consume alcohol for the first three weeks of the DBC programme.

Exercise

Exercise is a helpful adjunct to successful and maintained weight loss.

Exercise goals will be discussed throughout the programme. These should feel achievable and manageable.

Drink sufficient water

Ensure a minimum of 1.5 - 2 litres of water daily – this is essential to help detoxify your system, help maintain your energy levels, and enable optimal functioning for all major organs – particularly your liver and kidneys.