

November is National Diabetes Month, so now is a good time for everyone to look at food habits that may be affecting their health. For those recently diagnosed as having diabetes, or for those who have a family history that may contribute to developing diabetes, changing eating habits can be the most challenging aspect of diabetes self-management--particularly for those who eat foods popular in the American South and the Caribbean.

Every day there are difficult choices to make that will affect an individual's blood sugar levels and their health. According to Constance Brown-Riggs, MEd, RD, CDE, CDN, author of *Eating Soulfully and Healthfully with Diabetes* (<http://www.eatingsoulfully.com>, \$17.95 pb), diabetes is more manageable if these 10 Tips are followed:

### 10 Tips for Eating Soulfully and Healthfully with Diabetes

1. **Buy more fresh fruits and vegetables.** A diet rich in potassium may help to maintain healthy blood pressure. Bananas, cantaloupe, apricots, oranges, plantains, sweet potatoes, beet greens, white potatoes, tomato products, lima beans, and spinach are all rich in potassium.
2. **Increase Fiber by choosing whole grain breads and cereals.** For a healthy diet, eat at least 3 servings of whole-grain products per day. Brown rice, buckwheat, oatmeal, whole-wheat bread and, of course, corn bread are good sources of fiber.
3. **Eat more poultry and fish.** Try lean ground poultry instead of ground beef. Fish contain healthy oils, so choose fish frequently instead of meat. Yes, whiting and porgy are included - but not deep fried!
4. **Remove skin and fat from poultry and meats before cooking.** Avoid high cooking temperatures or searing meat. High heat locks in the fat. Moderate cooking temperatures help to reduce the fat.
5. **Use low fat cooking methods.** Broil, bake, stir fry or grill food instead of frying. When eating out, avoid foods described as buttery, batter dipped, crispy, with gravy or with cheese sauce.
6. **Get rid of the salt pork.** Try seasoning greens with smoked turkey, low-salt chicken or vegetable stock instead of salt pork.
7. **Use less salt, more pepper, herbs and seasoning.** Eating less salt helps control high blood pressure. Read the nutrition facts label and choose foods with less than 5 percent daily value for sodium.

8. **Slow down and chew.** Eating slowly can actually help you eat less and loose weight. Put your knife and fork down between each bite and chew your food at least 20 times before swallowing.
9. **Eat the correct amount of food.** Not weighing and measuring your food? Try the plate method. Make  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your plate starch,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your plate meat or protein and fill the other half with vegetables.
10. **Practice mindful eating.** Take time to look at what you're eating. Notice the colors, textures and aroma of the food. How does this food fit into your meal plan? Notice the portions. Finally, think about how hungry you are. Now decide how much you really need and enjoy!

"Don't try to make these changes all at once," Brown-Riggs advises, "and don't be discouraged if you can't follow all the tips all the time." Small gradual changes work best and tend to last. Aim to follow one tip each week until the list has been mastered. Start today toward the goal of eating soulfully and healthfully to control or possibly prevent diabetes.

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Adapted from *Eating Soulfully and Healthfully with Diabetes: Includes Exchange List and Carbohydrate Counts for Traditional Foods from the American South and Caribbean* by Constance Brown-Riggs, MEd, RD, CDE, CDN (<http://www.eatingsoulfully.com>, \$17.95 pb). This comprehensive guide provides nutrition information and carbohydrate-counts for foods that African Americans who suffer from diabetes don't want to (and don't need to) give up. Brown-Riggs hopes her book will encourage African Americans to prepare and enjoy traditional ethnic fare while maintaining normal glucose levels and healthy food intake. The book includes complete nutritional information for name-brand products that don't appear elsewhere, such as Allen's, Glory, and Zatarains. The book is available at bookstores nationwide, online or by calling 1-800-288-4677.

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To request a review copy of *Eating Soulfully and Healthfully with Diabetes*, arrange an interview with Constance Brown-Riggs, request electronic cover art, or for any additional information, please contact Kate Bandos at KSB Promotions, 800-304-3269 or 616-676-0758, fax 616-676-0759, [kate@ksbpromotions.com](mailto:kate@ksbpromotions.com).