Stick a (Big) Fork in It!

Eat-well tips for people with diabetes. Hint: You can eat more of the foods you love than you think.

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There are no absolutes about food when you are living with diabetes, and it certainly doesn't mean the end of good eating, says registered dietitian Constance Brown-Riggs, MSEd. The idea that you can never again eat foods such as peas, potatoes, sugar, corn or cake is an outdated misconception. People living with diabetes can still enjoy delicious foods while managing their disease and blood sugar. That's why Brown-Riggs offers these tasty words of wisdom:

- Eat what you want. There are no bad foods that must be eliminated from the diet forever. If blood sugar is under control, then you can work in sweets. However, it's important to keep the amount within your carbohydrate allowance; remember that you can substitute sweets and desserts for starch, fruit or milk.

- Sugar-free isn't always the best option. Because of concern about rising blood sugar levels, people with diabetes may be tempted to eat mostly sugar-free foods. Many sugar-free foods are sweetened with sugar alcohols, such as sorbitol and mannitol. But these can cause diarrhea and upset stomach. That means, use in small quantities or not at all.

- Use a large fork and take big bites. According to Brown-Riggs, a study published in the Journal of Consumer Research showed that people end up eating less if they try these tactics. The result? Weight loss, one of the best ways to improve glucose levels, reduce insulin resistance and lessen the need for oral diabetes meds.

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