

Friday favourite fish and chips

“Can we have fish ‘n’ chips mum; plea...se...se mum, we haven’t had them for ages?” my son pleads with all the guile a 10-year-old can muster. “My friend is staying the night and it’s a real treat to have fish ‘n’ chips.”

His friend looks at him and chirps: “We have fish ‘n’ chips every Friday night. But it’s not a treat, it gets boring having the same meal every Friday night and they don’t taste that good when you have them so often.”

Wise words from my son’s 10-year-old mate. A traditional Friday night takeaway for many Kiwis is fish and chips.

Fish and chips can increase blood glucose levels significantly for someone with diabetes because of the large amount of carbohydrate. Carbohydrate comes mainly from the chips but is also in the batter around the fish, and the extras we may order such as a potato fritter or hotdog.

New Zealanders eat 120,000 tonnes of chips each year.

The fat content of hot chips depends both on the thickness and the cut of the chips. The thinner the chip, the greater the surface area and the more fat that is absorbed.

Shoestring chips contain on average 15% fat compared to thick-cut straight chips with a fat content of about 10%.



Fish & chips (18 teaspoons fat)



Fish & chips with salad (9 teaspoons fat)

Crumbed or battered fish?

I’m sure you have seen friends order crumbed fish thinking it’s better for their health than the battered, or peel off the batter and throw it out only to look at the batter and say: “I wish I could eat that but I’m not allowed.”

One average sized piece of battered fish provides 1839 kJ (437 calories), 30 grams fat and 21 grams of carbohydrate. The same sized crumbed fish provides 1299 kJ (309 calories), 18 grams of fat and 18 grams of carbohydrate but the problem is battered and crumbed are not usually the same size, so direct comparison is hard.

Freshly crumbed fish fillets purchased from a fish and chip shop can be large, up to 350 grams of fish each. This compares to a standard battered fish being more like 146 grams.

The crumbs absorb some fat and also contribute carbohydrate.

Now for the times when you do choose to have fish and chips for a treat the important consideration is portion size, of both the fish and the chips you eat. The bigger the portion size the more energy, fat and carbohydrate eaten, and the greater impact on your blood glucose levels.

Ten questions to ask yourself:

1. How many pieces of fish do I order? Can I reduce the amount ordered?
2. How large is each piece of fish? Ask about the serving size before you order and if it's large consider sharing one piece between two people.
3. Do I feel bloated and full, as if I have overeaten after eating fish and chips? Can I order less next time?
4. How often do I eat takeaways, including fish and chips? Could I eat them less frequently?
5. Have I tested my blood glucose before the meal and again two hours after to see the impact this meal has on my diabetes management? Consider doing this next time you eat fish and chips.
6. Is my body weight gradually increasing? As fat has twice as much energy as other foods think about the amount of food you eat cooked in fat or oil. Can I cut down?
7. Do I order takeaways out of habit or are they an occasional treat? Is this a family tradition every Friday night, without much thought being given to alternatives? Could I plan an alternative meal easily by buying a piece of fillet and steaming it with nutritious vegetables such as peas and carrots?
8. Do you eat straight from the fish and chips wrapper? Could you have better control of how much you eat if you used a plate? This way you will clearly know how much you have served yourself rather than eating until the wrapper is empty.
9. What extras do you eat with your fish and chips, including any bread and butter, sauces, mayonnaise and drinks? These all add to the impact the total meal has on your blood glucose control. What exchanges could you make to improve the extras e.g. use lemon juice or vinegar instead of mayonnaise?
10. Do I need chips with my fish? Can I cut down on the chips? or add vegetables at home?

Three ways you can eat fish and chips while still managing good blood glucose control:

1. Order fewer chips, to fill no more than one quarter of your plate.
2. Remember that one standard piece of fish per person is an adequate serving.
3. Add a ready made salad or some cooked frozen vegetables to fill half your plate. This will reduce both the amount of carbohydrate and fat eaten and increase your fibre intake and help to keep your blood glucose within the acceptable range. ●

Article by Alison Pask, New Zealand Registered Dietitian.

Helping DSL help you

There is change afoot at Diabetes Supplies Limited (DSL), with a new board and a focus on growing the business to meet the needs of all people with diabetes says newly appointed chairman Dennis Baty.

DSL is wholly owned by Diabetes New Zealand Inc. It is – as its name suggests – a diabetes supply business which needs your support.

DSL has been operating for many years, but in recent times there has been a significant decline in patronage, particularly in the supply of blood testing strips.

There is a need to rebuild and develop this business. Not only can it be one of the organisation's core services for people with diabetes, but every dollar made from it is returned to Diabetes New Zealand. This money in turn helps the national organisation fund the many services it offers – such as a national office, advocacy work, information provided via the website, *diabetes* magazine, and pamphlets. In the new economy Diabetes New Zealand, like everyone else, has to become more self-sufficient.

The vision for DSL is that it becomes a place everyone goes to for the best in diabetes related products and supplies. But we need you to help us get there.

It is so easy and here's how. DSL simply asks that you get your blood testing prescriptions filled by them.

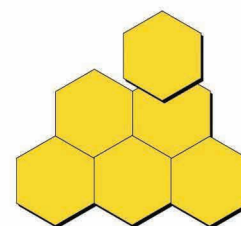
Next time you need more blood strips, ask your doctor to write a separate prescription for them (in other words, no other medicines on the same prescription).

Simply pop your test strip-only prescription in an envelope and address it to:

Diabetes Supplies Ltd, P O Box 54, Oamaru.

Include \$1.50 (cheque or postage stamps) – unless you have a Community Services card or are a high volume user, in which case no payment is required. Post the lot off and DSL will dispatch your full three months' supply of test strips on the same day they receive your prescription.

Simple as that and you can do it knowing you are helping us to help you.



**Diabetes
Supplies Ltd**