

Sweets and diabetes

From the sweeties.net wiki

A diagnosis of diabetes does not mean sweets are banned for life. The charity Diabetes UK takes a practical view: treats are possible in moderation, products sold as diabetic are not the answer, and for many people sweets have a second, medical use.

Can you still eat sweets?

Diabetes UK's advice on chocolate is that you can eat it, just in moderation and not too often. It suggests deciding how much you are going to eat and putting the rest away, out of reach, and choosing a smaller portion of ordinary chocolate rather than a special product.

It is worth keeping the wider guidance on sugar in mind too. The NHS advises adults to have no more than 30 g of free sugars a day, and boiled sweets are nearly all sugar: see [how much sugar is in sweets?](#) Your own diabetes team can advise on what suits you.

Why not diabetic sweets?

Sweets and chocolate were once sold as suitable for diabetics. Diabetes UK does not recommend them, and says that describing a food as diabetic is against the law, because there is no evidence that these products offer any special benefit over eating healthily. Its reasons:

- diabetic chocolate is just as high in saturated fat and calories as ordinary chocolate
- it can still raise blood sugar levels
- it is often more expensive
- it can sometimes have a laxative effect

Sugar alcohols, the sweeteners often used in place of sugar, can have a laxative effect: see [why do sugar free sweets carry a laxative warning?](#)

Sweets as treatment

For people whose diabetes treatment can cause a hypo, or low blood sugar, sweets can be medicine. Diabetes UK says adults should treat a hypo immediately with 15 to 20 g of fast acting carbohydrate, and lists sugary non diet drinks, glucose tablets, sweets such as jelly babies, pure fruit juice and glucose gels among the options.

Diabetes UK also warns that manufacturers have been reducing sugar in soft drinks since the soft drinks levy began in 2018, so it advises checking the label of your usual hypo treatment regularly. Recipes can change, so check the label on any sweet you rely on: see [why are jelly babies used for low blood sugar?](#)

Everyone's treatment plan is different. Follow the advice of your own diabetes team.

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