



THE BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

The Professional Association for Registered Dietitians
5th Floor, Charles House, 148/9 Great Charles Street Queensway, Birmingham B3 3HT
Tel: 0121 200 8080 Fax: 0121 200 8081



Media Release

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People with Diabetes cannot eat grapes or bananas, or can they?

A snapshot survey by dietitians found that people with diabetes are confused about what foods they can and cannot eat. The results showed the most common myths amongst people with diabetes are:

1. People with diabetes can't eat grapes
2. People with diabetes must follow a sugar-free diet
3. People with diabetes can't eat bananas
4. Diet drinks contain sugar
5. Starchy foods are bad for you and make you gain weight

Other major misconceptions such as olive oil having less fat than butter, and diabetic chocolate being low in fat and calories were also common.

The survey of dietitians working in diabetes was carried out by the Diabetes Management and Education Group of the British Dietetic Association to coincide with Diabetes Awareness Week (8-14 June).

The experience of diabetes dietitians demonstrates that, of the 2.2 million people in the UK with diagnosed diabetes, a significant number are confused about appropriate food choices. Additionally, the latest figures from Diabetes UK, the national charity for people with diabetes, show that at least a fifth (6,000) of the 30,000 calls each year to their *Careline* are from people with concerns or questions about food.

Paul McArdle of the British Dietetic Association said: "Eating well with diabetes is often similar to eating well for everybody, it's all about how much and how often a particular food is eaten – that way almost nothing is entirely off limits! If you're unclear, ask to be referred to a dietitian who can answer your questions using the latest evidence-based information."

Food choices are one of the main factors affecting the quality of life for people with diabetes, causing concern and anxiety for many with the condition. One way to reduce this confusion is for consistent evidence-based messages to be given at all opportunities, and registered dietitians are best placed to do this through a combination of individualised advice, structured patient education in groups and by training other health professionals.

The British Dietetic Association has a range of factsheets available to download from www.bda.uk.com including a recently updated one entitled '*Food Choices & Diabetes*'. Diabetes UK also produces excellent resources and their web site should be bookmarked for anyone looking for diabetes information online: www.diabetes.org.uk.

Media enquiries to The British Dietetic Association should be directed to our media hotline on 0870 850 2517 or pr@bda.uk.com.

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Notes to Editors

1. The Survey was carried out during May & June 2008 and approximately 20 dietitians (of approximately 80 questioned) working in diabetes responded by email.
2. The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for registered dietitians in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals with nearly 6,000 members. About two-thirds of members are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining members work in education, industry, research, sport settings or freelance.
3. Registered dietitians hold the only legally-recognisable graduate qualification in nutrition and dietetics. They are experts in interpreting and translating the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related problems. Their advice is sound and based on current scientific evidence. Registration, awarded by the Health Professionals Council, is an indication that a dietitian is fit to practise and is working within an agreed statement of conduct. For further details about the British Dietetic Association, please visit our website: www.bda.uk.com.