

taste

By EMMA PALMER
emma.palmer@nqe.com

Being diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes is a hammer blow in itself. Then comes the realisation you are going to have to massively overhaul your eating habits. Basically curries, takeaways and puddings are out. Or are they?

One innovative Billericay wife has set out to prove living with this most common type of diabetes doesn't have to mean you'll be stuck eating bland salads and soups for the rest of your life.

In fact, when it comes to Susan Hegedus's new electronic cookbook, hearty dinners and tasty puddings are very much on the menu – it just means they are made with the healthiest ingredients possible.

After her 47-year-old husband Anthony was diagnosed with diabetes back in 2010, Susan found herself becoming galvanised into action cookery-wise. She realised she needed to come up with ways to keep her foodie spouse happy, but healthy.

Susan, who is mum to Sam, 15, Olive, 13 and Amy 16, said: "My husband was and is a real foodie. I mean he really loves his food, so at first he was worried he was going to be confined to eating rabbit food for the rest of his life.

"So I thought there had to be a way to cook honest, hearty meals for a man who likes his food – and so I did.

"I love to experiment in the kitchen. It's my way of relaxing, so as time went on, I'd play around with recipes to make them as healthy as possible, but also keep the taste and the appeal.

"The whole spirit of the book is yes, you have to eat healthier if you are diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, but you don't have to totally deprive yourself of the foods you love."

The mum-of-three's exploits in the kitchen have now been compiled and published in an e-book, the Type 2 Diabetes Cookbook for Real Men. Available to download on an e-reader, on iPads and computers for £1.53, the

My husband has diabetes, but that doesn't stop me cooking hearty dinners for him

book contains a seven-day eating plan for a family in which someone is a Type 2 diabetic.

As a busy working mum of three, Susan quickly realised she was not going to have the time to be rustling up different sets of meals every night.

Susan, an author and freelance writer, said: "At the start, I would make two different meals, one for my husband and one for the rest of us, but I soon realised not only was this hard work, but psychologically it felt wrong, because he wasn't eating the same as us. It was like an 'us and him' situation at the dinner table and I didn't want that.

"That's when I decided to just make one meal we could all enjoy. Not only has it been a lot more practical, but we've all found we feel a lot healthier now. Anthony, in particular, has lost a lot of weight and feels a lot better."

Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't produce enough insulin to function properly. Insulin controls the amount of sugar in the blood, and having diabetes means blood sugar levels can become too high.

About 2.9 million people in the UK are affected by diabetes – 90 per cent of which have the Type 2 form of the disease. Type 1 affects people who are born with the condition and must inject themselves with insulin.

Current guidelines recommend eating three healthy meals a day, which are low in sugar and fat, to control Type 2.

Susan's cookbook is packed with easy-to-make recipes for breakfast, lunch and dinner for a week.

"There are pasta and fish dishes, as well as desserts such as chocolate mousse made with dark chocolate, because it's better for you, or fruit-based puddings," said Susan, who has previously written a historical book, the Hidden Green Man in Essex, which was published in 2011.

"Other recipes include a hearty shepherd's pie, which is topped with sweet potatoes instead of mash, a healthy curry and Irish soda bread, which is made with wholemeal flour."

Susan's tips to crank up the

health factor in her recipes include using honey as a sweetener instead of sugar, but although she will replace some ingredients, she believes if it's natural, it's generally OK.

She said: "I won't use semi-skimmed milk. We have kept full-fat milk, but we don't drink too much of it. It's all about moderation.

"You have to be careful with the ingredients you use, but you don't have to completely cut things out. It's about getting the right combination of a recipe being good for your body and tempting to the tastebuds."

■ Susan's e-book is published by Luscious Books and is available to download from Amazon for £1.53. For more details, visit

lusciousbooks.wordpress.com



BAKED GOATS' CHEESE FIGS

Ingredients (Serves 4)

8 figs
60g (2oz) soft goats' cheese

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 200C/400F/gas mark 6.
2. Cut each fig into vertical quarters, without cutting all the way through to the bottom.
3. Place a little goats' cheese in the middle of each fig.
4. Put the figs into an oven-proof dish and bake them for 20 minutes.

I thought there had to be a way to cook honest, hearty meals for a man who likes his food



■ Healthy dishes – Susan Hegedus, from Billericay, has produced an e-book of recipes suitable for people with Type 2 diabetes, which her husband Anthony suffers from