



DIABETES

WHAT IS IT?

A condition in which the body has trouble managing blood sugar because of problems making or using *insulin*.

Insulin is a hormone that is secreted by the pancreas when blood sugar rises (after eating, for example). Its main job is to get glucose from the blood into the cells, where it can be used to make energy or be stored for later use. If you have diabetes, your body doesn't make enough (or any) insulin, or doesn't use insulin well. Glucose then stays in your blood and doesn't reach your cells, which leads to a number of symptoms and potential complications.

GENTLE NUTRITION SUGGESTIONS

Follow as you are able to

- Eating regular meals and snacks throughout the day (not skipping meals) will help prevent major fluctuations in blood sugar levels
- Try combining carbohydrates with fat and protein at meals and snacks. Glucose is the #1 source of energy for our brains, and comes from the digestion of carbohydrates. In other words, our bodies need carbs! Combining fat and protein with carbohydrates slows down digestion and allows for a slower and more stable release of sugar into the blood
- Begin to notice how your body feels after eating, and how certain foods and food combinations change your blood sugar. Over time this will help you figure out what works for you and your body

**If any of these suggestions are harmful to other aspects of your health, then do not engage in them*

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prioritize sleep. Lack of sleep or poor quality sleep can lead to unstable blood sugar by disrupting hormones that control blood sugar
- Practice stress management. Stress activates the sympathetic nervous system, causing a rise in blood sugar
- Engaging in physical activity can help regulate blood sugar. This doesn't have to mean strenuous exercise. Choose an activity you enjoy!
- Seek support from friends, family, online forums, support groups, pets, etc. Talk to your dietitian or other healthcare provider if you need help finding support.

Remember

We are imperfect beings and each day is new and different. Some days it may be easier to follow the suggestions than others.

Be gentle with yourself.

Goal

Self compassion and kindness towards your body

Every body is different

There are a spectrum of symptoms and reactions

If any food or movement recommendations do not feel right for your body, trust that! It may be helpful to talk more about this with your dietitian.



TOTAL HEALTH

Health is complex and is influenced by many factors.

Not all factors are within your control.

It is important to consider all of these factors, not just food and movement choices, when exploring ways to improve your health.



Psst..

It is not your fault for having this health condition!
Discuss causes and risk factors with your doctor or registered dietitian if you are interested.

References

- Mahan KL, Raymond JL. *Krause's Food and The Nutrition Care Process, 14th Ed.* St Louis, MO: Elsevier; 2017.
- Norman, J. Normal regulation of blood glucose. The important role of insulin and glucagon: diabetes and hypoglycemia. Endocrine Web website, 2016. <https://www.endocrineweb.com/conditions/diabetes/normal-regulation-blood-glucose>. Accessed February 2019.
- Bacon L, Matz J. Intuitive Eating: Enjoy your Food, Respect your Body. In: *Diabetes Self-Management*. November/December 2010. https://lindabacon.org/pdf/BaconMatz_Diabetes_EnjoyingFood.pdf. Accessed February 2019.