

How to Reduce Blood Glucose

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If you've been diagnosed with diabetes or have been told that you need to reduce the levels of glucose in your blood, you'll need to make changes in your diet and lifestyle. Left unchecked, [high glucose levels](#) can cause nerve, kidney and heart damage. Fortunately, there are a lot of easy ways to reduce the glucose in your blood through diet, [exercise](#) and medications.

Difficulty: Moderate

Instructions

things you'll need:

- Complete physical exam by your doctor
Clinical laboratory test
24-hour diet log from a registered dietitian

Diet

- 1 After you've determined that your blood glucose levels are high, it's time to develop a plan. Typically, reducing blood glucose requires making adjustments to your diet, getting more exercise and may also include taking medications prescribed by your doctor. Start by discussing your options with your doctor.
- 2 Make an appointment with a registered dietitian to discuss how to make gradual changes in your diet. Write down the quantities of everything you eat and the frequency of your snacks within a 24-hour period and review them with your dietitian. Your responses will help determine the best approaches for reducing or eliminating [foods](#) in your diet that raise your glucose levels.
- 3 One of the most common mistakes made by people who have high glucose levels is eating foods that are high on the "glycemic index." The glycemic index represents foods that quickly raise your blood glucose levels. The glycemic index runs from 0 to 100. Foods low on the glycemic index include many fruits and vegetables like broccoli, cucumbers and eggplant. Foods in the medium range include brown rice, boiled potatoes and raisins. High GI foods include white bread, graham crackers and waffles. For a comprehensive list of foods and their GI rating, click on the link at the bottom of this article. Choose foods you like from the list of the low GI foods and begin integrating them into your daily diet.
- 4 Discuss your diet with a dietitian and slowly make changes, exchanging low GI foods for those that are high. You don't need to make dramatic changes all at one time. Begin making easy choices and progress over the course of several weeks. Some experts recommend that you try to keep your daily GI to less than 80. Serious athletes can afford higher GI ratings.

Exercise

- 1 Another effective way to reduce the level of glucose in your blood is to get regular exercise. Aerobic exercise has been proven to burn more glucose by active muscles, resulting in lower glucose levels the entire day. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, healthy adults should get at least 20 minutes of daily aerobic exercise. Try recruiting a friend to help you stick with your exercise program.
- 2 Before you begin any exercise program, be sure to get clearance from your doctor---especially if you've been diagnosed with diabetes. He will work with you to help monitor your blood glucose during physical activity and make necessary adjustments to your medications.

- 3 Make an appointment with an exercise specialist---preferably one who has been certified by the American College of Sports Medicine and is familiar with with diabetes. Exercising immediately after taking glucose reducing medications can cause abnormally low glucose levels, resulting in fainting.
- 4 Have your exercise specialist calculate your target heart rate range. The specialist can also prescribe an exercise program with specific recommendations for exercise frequency, intensity and duration. If you are using a glucose monitor, test your glucose before, during and after exercise and record the results in an exercise log.

Medications

- 1 If your doctor feels that you'll need more help than what's effective through diet and exercise, he may prescribe medications for you to help lower your glucose levels. Before beginning to take medications, discuss all of your other options with him. Once you begin taking glucose-lowering medication, it's usually a lifelong practice.
- 2 Start a log and record your glucose levels at various times of the day. Some hand-held glucose monitors store results up to several weeks and allow you download the results to your computer, where you can create charts and graphs of your glucose levels.
- 3 If you find that you're having difficulties maintaining your glucose levels during exercise, discuss your options with your doctor. He may recommend changing your medications, the types of exercise you practice and the time of day you take your medication. Managing your glucose levels while staying active is often a finely tuned balance.

Tips & Warnings

- Check with your doctor before you begin taking steps to reduce your glucose Explore all of your other options before starting medication Use the services of a registered dietitian and exercise specialist
- Avoid assuming your glucose will correct itself. You need to work with your doctor, dietitian and exercise specialist to help lower your levels. Over-the-counter remedies are often untested and unreliable.

Resources

- [American College of Sports Medicine](#)
- [Glycemic index food chart](#)