

Ways to Reduce High Blood Sugar

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If you've been told that you have high blood sugar, it could be the first signs of a serious disease called diabetes. Diabetes is a metabolic disease that affects the way the body uses blood sugar (also called blood glucose). Too much glucose in the blood can ultimately lead to heart and kidney damage, blindness and even loss of limb, so it's important to have strategies for keeping your glucose within normal ranges.

The Role of Diet in Managing Glucose Levels

One of the most effective ways to manage blood glucose levels is with the diet. All [foods](#) can be classified into one of three types: carbohydrates, fats or proteins. The amount of glucose contained in carbohydrates can be quantified by the number of grams of carbohydrate it contains and its glycemic index. Glycemic index is the concentration of carbohydrates in foods and how fast they will make your blood glucose levels rise. The higher the GI of foods, the faster it will cause your blood sugar to rise. The lower the GI, the less it will elevate blood glucose levels.

Packaging labels will typically display the number of servings and the number of grams of carbohydrate per serving. A good place to start is to limit your carbohydrate intake to 50 to 60 grams per day or 50 percent or less of your total caloric intake, whichever is less. You can also substitute high GI foods for those that stabilize blood sugar levels. For instance, dried dates have a GI of 103 but prunes have a GI of only 15.

Learning how to manage your portion sizes by weighing them and understanding which foods are less calorie dense will help keep you satisfied and maintain a lower blood sugar level.

Exercise Can Help

[Exercising](#) can help lower blood sugar levels in three ways. First, you consume fuel in the form of circulating glucose during the activity. Second, by exercising you increase your overall metabolic rate of your muscles and tissues throughout the day. In essence, your idling speed remains high hours after you've finished exercising. Third, [exercise](#) make the muscles more sensitive to insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas that facilitates the uptake of glucose. The more sensitive muscles are to insulin, the better chance they have for using blood sugar.

Medications to Lower Blood Sugar

For those who cannot manage their blood sugar levels after at least three months of diet and exercise, prescription medications called oral hypoglycemic agents are the next step in treatment.

Oral hypoglycemic agents are prescription drugs that are classified into five groups: Sulfonylureas, Meglitinides, Biguanides, Thiazolidinediones and Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors. Sulfonylureas and Meglitinides are used to stimulate the pancreas into making more insulin. Biguanides and Thiazolidinediones work by reducing the amount of glucose produced by the liver and increasing tissue sensitivity to insulin. Thiazolidinediones work by inhibiting the digestion and absorption of glucose in the small intestine. Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors work by inhibiting an enzyme that breaks complex carbohydrates down into simpler

sugars and inhibits their absorption.

Resources

- [Glycemic Index of Popular Foods](#)