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WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO LOWER BLOOD SUGAR?



You've probably heard that high blood sugar levels can cause all kinds of health problems, including diabetes.

You might have also recently learned that your levels are high and want to know why and what you can do about it before having to turn to drugs.

Well, I have good news: you're in the right place.

WHAT IS BLOOD SUGAR?

Blood sugar is the amount of glucose that's dissolved in your blood. When you eat carbohydrates, your body breaks them down into glucose, which is a simple sugar molecule that your cells process for energy.

Thus, your blood sugar levels at any given time are largely determined by how many carbs were in your last meal, and on how carbohydrate-rich your diet is on the whole.

HOW DO YOU MEASURE BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS?

There are two basic ways you can measure blood sugar levels.

First, there's a glucose meter, which you can find in most drugstores. The process here is simple: you prick your finger with a small needle, put a drop of blood on a test strip, and feed it into the meter, which analyzes the blood and tells you your current blood sugar levels.

Second, you can take an A1C test, which measures how well your body has been processing glucose over the last several months. It does this by analyzing how much glucose is attached to your red blood cells, because the more there is, the higher your average blood sugar levels have been.

WHAT ARE HEALTHY BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS?

Blood sugar levels are typically measured in milligrams per deciliter, or mg/dL.

If you're using a glucose meter, here's what's considered a healthy reading:

- ✓ Around 70 to 99 mg/dL when fasted (when you haven't eaten anything for at least 6 to 8 hours).
- ✓ Less than 140 mg/dL 1 to 2 hours after a meal.

Your blood sugar levels will ebb and flow throughout the day depending on when and what you've eaten last, but those are good rules of thumb.

A healthy A1C reading is generally 5.7 or less, which means your blood sugar was, on average, under 120 mg/dL over the past 2 to 3 months.

If your A1C level is between 5.7 and 6.4, then you're considered prediabetic, and if your level is at 6.5 or above on two separate tests (to verify the results are accurate), then you're diabetic.

WHAT IS HIGH BLOOD SUGAR?

Scientifically speaking, high blood sugar, or hyperglycemia, is defined as a blood glucose reading of over 130 mg/dL without eating beforehand, or over 180 mg/dL 1 to 2 hours after eating a meal.

What makes this condition insidious is the fact that it doesn't necessarily produce immediate symptoms.

Your blood sugar levels have to skyrocket to over 240 mg/dL before you start to feel anything particularly noticeable like extreme thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, blurred vision, or other associated problems.

WHAT CAUSES HIGH BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS?

Short-term spikes in blood sugar are caused by things like eating a huge meal or being sick or really stressed, and generally aren't a big deal so long as your body can normalize.

If it can't, though, and blood sugar levels remain elevated for too long, that's a sign that you're becoming insulin resistant, which means that your cells stop responding to signals from the hormone insulin.

In case you're not familiar with it, insulin helps carry glucose into cells to be used as energy. You can think of it as a "key" that "unlocks" your cells so glucose can enter and be turned into energy.

When your body becomes insulin resistant, though, it's like the locks get changed and insulin can no longer shuttle the glucose in your blood into your cells for use. Thus, it remains in your bloodstream for longer than it should, which has adverse effects in the body.

This is why prediabetes is extremely harmful to the body and why, if it isn't corrected, it turns into Type II diabetes.

HOW DO YOU LOWER YOUR BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS?

The simplest ways to keep your blood sugar in a healthy range are twofold:

- ✓ Get and stay relatively lean.
- ✓ Exercise consistently.

Reducing your body fat levels is one of the best ways to improve your whole-body insulin sensitivity because as your body composition improves, your cells become more responsive to insulin, allowing for the proper and healthy disposal of glucose.

Many people think of exercise as just a way to burn calories, but most don't know that it also improves insulin sensitivity, even without weight loss.

Research shows that strength training appears to be especially good for this, and while high-intensity interval training can cause blood sugar levels to stay elevated for 1 to 2 hours post-workout, studies show that it lowers your average blood sugar levels over time.

If you want to start with something easier, walking is a great alternative. Just walking thirty minutes per day can significantly improve your insulin sensitivity.

You've probably heard that certain foods can help here, too, like cinnamon, chromium, and apple cider vinegar, but don't believe the hype — they're no magic bullets or quick fixes.

Maintaining a healthy body fat percentage and exercising regularly are the only reliable ways to consistently have healthy insulin sensitivity and blood sugar levels.

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