

Approaches to Change | Balanced Blood Sugar & Weight Loss

Approach 1: Reduce intake of refined and processed foods, meaning things that are in boxes, fast foods, fried foods, and foods in bags (chips, donuts, candy, crackers, and muffins). These refined processed carbohydrate foods turn to sugar in our body when eaten, causing blood sugar levels to rise. The hormone insulin is then released from the pancreas to help bring the blood sugar down or in the case of T1DM, we must take insulin to address the rising blood sugar levels. When we have continuous elevated blood sugars and high insulin levels for long periods of time this can lead to complications including stroke, blindness, heart attack, kidney failure, poor circulation, and amputations. However, this can be prevented, managed, or improved with changes in lifestyle and healthy, lower carbohydrate eating patterns.

Approach 2: Reduce intake of sugar, meaning in the forms of beverages, refined sugary foods, candy, processed foods, added sugar foods, certain dairy, high glycemic fruit, and juices. However, berries are encouraged because these are low in sugar, like strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, or blueberries.

Approach 3: Drinking 1/2 of your body weight in ounces of water per day is encouraged for proper hydration. This could also include water with lemon or lime, unsweetened beverages, or unsweetened sparkling water. Electrolytes in your water are also beneficial.

Approach 4: Eating Whole Real Foods is beneficial to our health and wellness, starting with 2 to 3 meals per day. At least 6 oz. of protein (meat) per meal is encouraged. Proteins can include fish, eggs, chicken, pork, beef, lamb, sausage, bacon (pork, turkey, or low-sodium bacon), seafood, turkey, or wild game. These can be grilled, baked, smoked, sautéed but not breaded with refined flours. For vegetables, non-starchy vegetables are encouraged. These help provide healthy vitamins and minerals. Examples are cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, peppers, green beans, onions, lettuce, spinach, kale, asparagus, cucumbers, okra, tomatoes, or mushrooms. Use natural sources of fat when cooking, such as olive oil, avocado oil, coconut oil, Ghee, or real butter. Healthy sources of nuts are great sources of healthy fats and protein that can be added to meals, but in moderation.

*Disclaimer: This is for educational and informational purposes only. While we draw on our prior professional expertise and background in many areas, you acknowledge that we are supporting you in our roles exclusively as a Registered Nurse and Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist (Jennifer), Master Certified Health Education Specialist/PhD, RD, BC-ADM and Certified Diabetes and Education Specialist (Catherine). We provide information concerning, but not limited to education and empowerment of lifestyle and behavior changes as well as providing support to improve health outcomes.

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Approach 5: Limit snacking between meals unless your blood sugar is low, such as 80 mg/dl or lower. Snacking, especially with refined carbs and sugary foods causes blood sugar levels to go up. This then causes more storage of fat to our body and organs because we need insulin to lower blood sugar and the higher the blood sugar, the more insulin we need. Also, Intermittent Fasting (IF) is the frequency of eating and not eating, so when we are not eating between meals, we are putting less stress on our pancreas and lowering our insulin levels or we are requiring less insulin in the case of Type 1 DM and insulin dependent T2DM. Rest from digestion is key for health and longevity and proper immune system function.

Approach 6: Exercise and strength train. 150 mins per week or more, with at least 2 days of strength training and lifting heavy things. This can also include walking or riding a bicycle for 30 mins 5 to 6 days per week. Cardio machines have interval programs, this is also known as High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). HIIT is great for those with limited time. Or take group fitness classes that are high intensity. Most group fitness classes can be modified to fit all levels of fitness. Exercise will not only help your blood sugar levels, but also help support healthy cholesterol numbers. Always consult with your physician before starting any new exercise program.

Approach 7: Check your blood sugar per your physician's orders. This is helpful in monitoring how your blood sugars are doing daily. A good blood sugar goal of 80-120 mg/dl before meals is recommended. We encourage you to check fasting blood sugar every day, before bedtime, or as needed and keep a log of them on paper if you prefer. Continuous Glucose Monitors are a wonderful tool and we highly recommend everyone wear one for at least 1 month. Ideally, check it sometimes fasting, sometimes 2 hours after a meal, and sometimes before bed to get a better idea of how your sugar is running throughout the day.

Approach 8: Intermittent Fasting (IF) and Time Restricted Eating (TRE) or Rest from digestion are great for increasing insulin sensitivity and lowering blood sugar as well as for weight loss. TRE is set times during the day when you eat. Ideally, you allow at least 12 hours between supper and your first meal the next day. If you can work up to 14 + hours daily that may work too. For example, if you eat supper at 6:00 PM your first meal the next day would not be until after 8:00 AM or after. IF is planned fasting for more than 24 hours. You do not want to do IF unless under medical supervision or we talk about it with you first.