

# Understanding How to Eat for Blood Sugar Management

**Diabetes** is a lifestyle illness. **Metabolic Syndrome** tells you that you are headed there. ***You can change this.***

No two people are exactly alike in their biochemical response to food. In the same person, the response to food can vary based upon many factors, including exercise, sleep, timing and content of previous meals, stress level, etc. Even the well-credentialed experts don't entirely agree on the "best" way to eat. Nutrition is an inexact and unfolding science.

You can help yourself considerably by being a bit of a detective and measuring your blood sugar levels under a variety of conditions and meal combinations to determine your own individual biochemical response.

Outlined below are "the basics" based upon the most current research by some of the foremost diabetes doctors. The primary goals are good nutrition to protect your body and maintaining appropriately low blood sugar and insulin levels.

- **Eat healthy (wild, lean and/or grassfed) proteins, and healthy fats (primarily mono's - not trans) at all meals and snacks.** This will help mitigate insulin response and sustain blood sugar levels.
- **Limit sugar and refined carbohydrates** to ¼ of the total content or as blood sugar readings dictate, and do not eat them by themselves. Especially when *not* combined with fat, protein or fiber, they can create dramatic spikes in your blood sugar.
- **Choose high fiber foods whenever possible.** Aside from the obvious nutritional benefits, this will also slow gastric emptying, keeping you fuller longer and blunting the blood sugar/insulin response.
- **Eat plentiful and unlimited amounts of low glycemic and colorful non-starchy vegetables and fruits at every eating opportunity.** Combine them with proteins and fats. Any plate of food, whether snack or meal should ideally be at least half produce. Two fruits and at least twice as many veggies is a good baseline. Veggies will fill you up, contain minimal calories (will not contribute to weight gain), contain fiber and virtually thousands of phytochemicals that help prevent cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke – all potential fallout from diabetes.
- **Eat healthy fats at every meal.** Fats (like olive, macadamia nut, avocado and fish oil) are a critical part of a healthy diet and help to regulate appetite
- **Eat at least every 3-4 hours, or as needed. Do not starve.** It doesn't work for either weight loss or diabetes. After a few hours of not eating, your body, (interpreting this as stress and automatically initiating the fight or flight response), releases cortisol to break down body parts for sugar. You end up with an insulin response anyway, not to mention, the inevitable overeating that eventually follows.

From the desk of.....*Susan L. Holmberg, MS, CNS*