

# Recommendations for Controlling Blood Sugar

Do you feel tired run down or depressed for no apparent reason? In many cases, problems regulating the supply of sugar to your brain and body cells may be the cause. A glucose tolerance test is the definitive way to determine a blood sugar problem.

All cells in the body burn the sugar glucose for energy, similar to the way engines burn gasoline. Reducing the supply of glucose to your brain cells can cause poor alertness, tiredness, difficulty concentrating, and even confusion, loss of memory and emotional depression.

Blood sugar levels can drop for various reasons, producing a variety of symptoms. One of the most common causes is the frequent use of highly-refined carbohydrates and sugar-rich foods and beverages in a person's diet.

Sugar and processed carbohydrates in the diet are rapidly absorbed from the gut, causing blood sugar to rise. The body tries to regulate blood sugar by holding it within a normal range, neither too high nor too low. The pancreas gland, for instance, produces insulin to bring the glucose level back down after a sugary meal or snack.

When sugar is consumed on a regular basis, the body often overcompensates for the frequent rises in blood sugar--bringing its levels down lower than it was beforehand. These lowered sugar levels make a person feel hungry, or crave more sweets. Taking that sugar rich snack provides a lift only temporarily, and leaves one feeling drained or tired again shortly afterward.

People caught in this vicious cycle may experience weakness, shakiness or trembling if they go too long without eating. In addition to mental fatigue or depression, they may have periods of lightheadedness, coldness of the hands and feet, or a variety of other mental or physical symptoms. These are usually relieved temporarily by eating.

If you have experienced this type of problem, you may find relief by following a few simple dietary guidelines.

## 1. Eliminate sugars

- Don't eat foods or beverages containing sugar, whether added or natural. Don't eat sweet tasting foods or drink.
- Read labels: Corn syrup, corn sweetener, sugar dextrose, glucose, fructose, brown sugar, cane sugar, beet sugar, turbinado sugar, date sugar, raisin syrup, and maple syrup are all sugar, and should be avoided in even the smallest amounts.
- Avoid the use of artificial sweeteners as a substitution for sugar. Research has shown that artificial sweeteners can cause aggravated hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), loss of diabetes control and precipitation of clinical diabetes in persons who were free from disease. In diabetics, it has caused an aggravation of complications related to diabetes.
- Naturally sweet foods must also be avoided, such as: honey, fruit juice, grapes, raisins, dried fruits, jams and jellies, fruits.
- Avoid all the following: ice cream, cake, candy, soda (all carbonated beverages), pies, pastries, canned jellies, preserves, Jell-O, most cold breakfast cereals, fruit juice, punch, and drink, breakfast syrups, and similar processed food items.
- Exceptions allowed: permitted a maximum of one 4-ounce selections daily from list below. Make sure the fruits are fresh and organic whenever possible.

Apple  
Melon  
Banana

Papaya  
Blueberries  
Grapefruit

Orange  
Fresh pineapple  
Pear

Home canned fruit with no added sweetener

## 2. Eat protein-rich and/or complex carbohydrate rich foods

You will probably feel better if you include some foods rich in protein and/or complex carbohydrates at most meals and snacks. Unlike sugar-rich foods, these provide a "time-released" source of sugar, yielding their glucose slowly and steadily, thereby helping to avoid the "peaks and valleys" of poor blood sugar regulation.

Foods such as eggs, fish and meats are protein rich. So are some types of cheese (like cottage cheese), nuts and seeds, and combinations of various beans and grains. Healthy carbohydrate foods include whole grains, cereals, and starchy vegetables, such as whole grain breads, potatoes, squash, legumes, beans, and brown rice.

Eating complex carbohydrates and protein-rich foods in small-to-moderate amounts (e.g.: 1-4 ounces), at most meals or snacks does not mean you should avoid other types of helpful foods which you enjoy, such as vegetables.

## 3. Eat small frequent meals

Eat small-to-moderate amounts of food every few hours, particularly if your energy is low. For example, eat 3 moderate meals daily, and one, two, or three between meal snacks as desired, or as needed to keep your energy or concentration up.

## Supplements

Many factors besides sweets in the diet influence blood sugar levels. Certain nutrients are also helpful in regulating blood sugar. The mineral chromium is particularly important for the proper utilization of insulin. Brewer's yeast, whole grains, beans and meat are the best food sources of this mineral. Dietary supplements including chromium may be indicated for some people with blood glucose concerns. Each individual is different therefore problems should be considered on an individual basis, whether or not professional treatment is required.

However, the three general guidelines we've discussed have helped many people to reclaim their lost energy and vitality.

In following these guidelines, you may feel worse for a couple of weeks before you begin to feel much better. After a few months or so, you may be able to add moderate amounts of sweets back into your diet without producing the same old symptoms. Patience and consistency bring healthy rewards.