

Type 2 diabetes is a disease in which the body does not properly use insulin, which a hormone needed for cells to absorb glucose/sugar from food, which is converted into energy needed to live. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body no longer produces insulin, thus it is required intravenously before meals.

Overweight and obesity is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes; extra body fat prevents insulin from doing its job, thus sugar is not cleared from the blood, resulting in high blood sugar. Risk factors also include a low level of physical activity and high blood pressure. Thankfully these risk factors are controllable and can be modified via lifestyle changes. In fact, the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) study revealed that a healthier diet and 30 minutes a day of moderate intensity exercise coupled with 5-10% weight reduction reduced diabetes incidence by 58%. While some cases of type 2 diabetes require medications to control blood glucose levels, the lifestyle changes (improved nutrition, weight loss, increased physical activity) implemented in the DPP have also been shown to significantly improve diabetes control, along with regular checkups with your health care team.

Tips for People with Type 2 Diabetes:

- Follow a consistent meal plan schedule (as prescribed by your physician or health care provider), which can promote blood glucose control; do not skip meals.
- Get 20-35 grams of fiber per day from quality carbohydrates- 100% whole grains; variety of fruits & vegetables; beans & legumes. Fiber promotes blood sugar control and heart health.
- Limit saturated fat; choose lean protein-fish, meat substitutes, skinless poultry, lean cuts of meat and non-fat & low-fat dairy- skim milk, low-fat cheese, low-fat yogurt
- Avoid fried foods; enjoy small portions of heart healthy fats like nuts, seeds and oils (olive)
- Cut back on high calorie & sugary foods; choose lower-sugar/sugar-free and lower-fat options
- Consume alcohol in moderation, men enjoy 2 drinks per day; women enjoy 1 drink per day
- Limit sodium to 2300 mg per day which = 1 teaspoon; cut back on salt and salty foods
- Engage in regular physical activity, which improves weight, blood glucose control and blood pressure; aim for 150 minutes of aerobics per day or 30 minutes 5 days per week

Certain nutrients affect blood sugar levels. For example, carbohydrates have a significant effect on blood sugar and include foods such as *starches* (bread, pasta, rice, cereal, starchy vegetables), *beans*, *dairy* (milk, yogurt, soy milk), *fruit and fruit juice*, *sweetened beverages* (sodas, sweet tea) and *sweets*. While all carbohydrates eventually break down into sugar through digestion, not all are equal. Some carbohydrates contain fiber, which allows sugars to enter the blood stream more steadily. This can prevent rapid spikes in blood sugar levels. By choosing controlled portions of high quality carbohydrates, spread out throughout the day, you can help control your blood sugar more effectively. The Mediterranean Diet Pyramid at right illustrates healthy eating recommendations.

Source: American Diabetes Association. Diabetes Prevention <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/prevention/>

For more information or to schedule a nutrition consult with one of the Emory HeartWiseSM Risk Reduction Program's registered dietitians, please call 404-778-7777.

