

## Q. What foods help control blood sugar levels?

**A.** How's your blood sugar level? If you're anything like the typical American, there's a chance it's a little higher than it should be. Fortunately, what you eat can make a difference.

### The trouble with high blood sugar

Higher than normal blood sugar levels can lead to diabetes. Over time, high blood sugar can lead to poor blood flow, organ damage, and vision loss. And, diabetes can raise your risk for heart disease or stroke.

Think you don't need to worry? Better think again. About 84 million people in the United States have levels high enough to put them at risk for diabetes. And many don't even know it.<sup>1</sup>

Healthy lifestyle habits help control blood sugar levels. Get regular exercise, maintain a healthy weight, and don't smoke. And there's at least one other lifestyle factor that has a lot to do with blood sugar levels...your diet.

### 5 foods to control blood sugar levels

Food is a big reason for higher-than-normal blood sugar levels. Americans eat a lot of fast food, burgers, sugary drinks, cereals, and biggie-sized desserts. And these foods are digested quickly. This, in turn, can cause a rapid spike in blood sugar levels.



Are you ready to improve your blood sugar level and reduce your risk for diabetes and other health problems? Eat less junk food and choose healthier options such as:

- 1. Leafy greens.** Try kale, broccoli, spinach, or chard. Leafy greens are high in fiber, magnesium, vitamin A, and other nutrients that can help control blood sugar. Perfect as a side dish, in a smoothie, or in a salad with vinaigrette or olive-oil dressing.
- 2. Brightly colored vegetables.** Most adults should eat about 2 to 3 cups of vegetables per day. But only 9 percent of adults eat enough vegetables.<sup>2</sup> Try red bell peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, beets, and cabbage. Serve steamed, baked, grilled, or freshly cut on a vegetable tray.
- 3. Low-calorie drinks.** Skip sweetened drinks like soda and sports drinks. They're loaded with empty calories that can lead to diabetes, weight gain, and other health problems.

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Instead, drink water. It's usually free and has zero calories. If you prefer a bit of flavor, add a squeeze of lemon or lime. Don't like water? Then drink herb tea or a low-sugar drink.

- 4. Berries.** If you're craving something sweet, you might be tempted to scarf down a candy bar. But that's a recipe for a spike in blood sugar levels. Instead, try blueberries, raspberries, or strawberries. These fruits are sweet. But research shows berries can help control blood sugar levels.<sup>3</sup>
- 5. Whole-grains.** Here's one more food that should be part of your diet if you want to be healthier and manage blood sugar levels...whole grains. It's found in foods like whole-grain breads, pasta, cereals, and oats. The high fiber content takes longer to digest and helps regulate blood sugar levels.

Want to keep your blood sugar levels under control to prevent or manage diabetes? Take a closer look at your diet. Eat more of these five kinds of foods.

### References

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