

Taking Back Your Life: Controlling Diabetes with Diet and Exercise

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease in which the blood sugar or glucose in the body is too high. This can happen as a result of the body no longer producing insulin or the body no longer responding to insulin in an appropriate way. Diabetes is, in most cases, a lifelong disease but it can be managed with medications and lifestyle changes.

If blood sugar is not maintained at a safe level, over time this can lead to various health conditions such as heart disease, vascular conditions, and eye issues.

Types of Diabetes

There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 Diabetes and Type 2 or Insulin Resistant Diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease that typically develops in children and young adults. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't produce enough insulin, or the body is no longer responding to insulin in a normal fashion. Type 2 diabetes mainly affects adults, but children can also be affected.

Using Diet and Exercise to Control Disease

It is well known that diet and exercise are a key factor in overall health. When diagnosed with a life altering disease such as diabetes, diet and exercise should move to the forefront of your mind. Eating a balanced diet and being physically active can help you keep your blood sugar in the targeted range to better control your disease.

The benefits of exercise are plentiful for anyone suffering from chronic disease, including those with diabetes. Research has shown that exercise consistently lowers patients Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) levels. This includes all forms of exercise such as resistance and aerobic. In addition to lowering HbA1c levels, exercise is shown to lessen insulin resistance in patients. Further, exercise helps to lessen the risk of diabetes related complications such as heart disease in patients.

When thinking about your diet and diabetes, it is important to plan to eat a wide variety of foods from all food groups. Having a balanced diet means eating foods from the following food groups: vegetables, fruits, grains, protein, dairy, and foods containing heart-healthy fats. Meeting with a clinician that specializes in diabetes can be very beneficial as they can help customize a meal plan for you that meets all your needs while also including all of the above-mentioned food groups.

Eating a wide variety of foods from each food group will help with blood sugar control as well as helping to control blood pressure and cholesterol. Further, this can help prevent or delay problems that may arise from diabetes. Eating healthy and staying active can help you lose weight or maintain at a healthy weight and help you to have increased energy, ultimately leading to you feeling better overall.

Overall, the benefits of eating healthy and exercising stretch far beyond the disease of diabetes. Exercise is beneficial for both physical and mental health and can be done with no equipment at home. Simply going out for a walk every day can provide insurmountable benefits. The same goes for eating a healthy, balanced diet. The benefits are plentiful and will overall lead to better disease control, increased energy, and leading a better lifestyle.

