

Simple Ways to Improve Blood Sugar

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The standard American (SAD) diet typically consists of excess refined sugar and fat, with low fiber intake. SAD, along with a sedentary lifestyle and poor stress management, can lead to insulin resistance including pre-diabetes, and diabetes. Long-term complications can include weight gain, poor eyesight, kidney issues, hypertension and heart disease.



What can you do to improve your A1c?

- Manage stress, limit alcohol and don't smoke
- Increase physical activity (150 minutes/week), balance cardio and resistance training
- Increase fiber consumption with fruit, vegetables, whole grains, beans, legumes
- Follow a diet low in refined sugar and saturated fat
- Eat at least three times a day and don't skip breakfast!
- Cut out sweet beverages and increase water intake
- Aim for a weight loss of 5-10% total body weight to start

Pro Tip:

RCH patients may qualify for discounted or free "Y" gym membership!

What is a HbA1c (A1c) lab?

- An A1c lab measures the amount of sugar that clings to a protein called hemoglobin in your red blood cells
- The test shows your average blood sugar over the past few months
- An ideal A1c range is less than 5.6%

What about artificial sweeteners?

These can have a long-term negative effect on your health and cause inflammation. Natural sweeteners like stevia and monk fruit are better alternatives in moderation.

Honey and agave? These are still refined sugars and should be used sparingly.

The Balanced Plate Method for Meals

½ of the plate – Vegetables or Fruit

- Contain a lot of fiber and phytonutrients which help stabilize blood sugar
- Get creative with your produce: try smoothies, soups, baked, dried or even frozen

¼ of the plate – Lean Protein

- Protein foods help to stabilize blood sugar
- Lean = low fat. Better choices include plant protein (beans, legumes, soy), fish, poultry and non-fat dairy
- A protein serving is typically 4oz

¼ of the plate – Complex Carbohydrates/ Starches

- Whole grains including, oats, barley, brown rice, sprouted bread, popcorn and quinoa
- Other choices include beans, seeds, potatoes and corn

A small amount of healthy fat

- Essential fats include Omega 3s and 6s
- Best choices are foods high in Omega 3s like seeds, nuts, avocado, tofu and fatty fish
- Saturated and trans fats are typically in ultra-processed foods or animal sources and should be limited

Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods



Make water
your drink of choice

Choose whole
grain foods

BALANCED SNACK IDEAS:

- Hummus, wheat pita and/or raw veggies
- Apple and peanut or almond butter
- Edamame (try with sesame or garlic)
- Wholegrain toast with avocado
- Homemade trail mix with unsalted nuts and dried fruit (or dark chocolate)
- Low-fat Greek yogurt with fruit
- Hardboiled egg and whole wheat crackers
- Homemade energy ball
- Popcorn with pepper or nutritional yeast
- Smoothie with various fruit, vegetables, plant-milk and protein
- Turkey or humus and vegetable roll-up on whole wheat tortilla (or ½ sandwich)
- Whole food snack bars (like Rx bar)

Pro Tip:

Consistency is key! Since your A1c is an average over several months, sticking to a long-term plan is important. Focus on small changes to start.

