

Men's Health

DIABETES PREVENTION

8 WAYS TO CONTROL YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

To prevent diabetes, start here

1. Exercise like it's a prescription. That means at least 20 to 30 minutes every day. It takes a only a few days of missed workouts and poor eating to worsen a person's insulin resistance, says Barry Braun, Ph.D., an associate professor of kinesiology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. To make sure you stick with it, choose the exercise that you enjoy the most.

2. Sprinkle cinnamon on everything you can stand. Studies show it can improve insulin sensitivity. This means your body needs less of the hormone insulin to keep your blood-sugar levels in check. "The cheap supermarket stuff works just as well as expensive supplement versions," says Jonny Bowden, Ph.D., C.N.S., author of *The Most Effective Natural Cures on Earth*.

3. If you already have high blood glucose, take alpha lipoic acid. "This supplement is unexcelled as a blood-sugar nutrient and is a prescription item in Europe," says Bowden. He recommends taking 300 milligrams twice a day. Puritan's Pride Alpha Lipoic Acid is reasonably priced and passed purity tests at consumerlab.com.

4. Skip the sugary sports drinks. University of Massachusetts scientists recently discovered that exercising improved insulin sensitivity by 40 percent when a 500-calorie deficit was created, but produced no improvement when the burned energy was immediately replaced with mostly carbohydrates.

5. Invest in a glucose monitor. It'll allow you to find out how specific meals, foods, and beverages affect your blood sugar. One option is the TrueTrack Smart System brand (\$13 for the monitor, \$35 for the strips, cvs.com). Simply prick your finger 2 hours after a meal. The number shouldn't be above 139 mg/dl, and it shouldn't be below 100 or your fasting number -- whichever is lower," says Keith W. Berkowitz, M.D. If you fall out of that range, you need an oral glucose-tolerance test.

6. Snack on pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds. A small handful won't impact blood sugar, and they're rich in magnesium, a mineral that fights insulin resistance, according to a 2006 study from Tufts University researchers.

7. Eat every 2 to 3 hours. Eating this often helps prevent drops in blood sugar, which can lead to sugar binges, says Dr. Berkowitz.

8. Check your meds. If you're taking a thiazide diuretic for hypertension, ask your doctor about switching to an ACE inhibitor. A 2006 *Hypertension* review of 59 drug trials found a "strong relationship" between low potassium levels caused by diuretics and increased blood glucose.

<http://www.menshealth.com/health/diabetes-prevention>