

Men's Health

BLOOD SUGAR

CONTROL YOUR CRAVINGS

Start a healthy new diet today—and stick with it for a lifetime

By Tom Hansen

Cravings are all about **blood sugar**. If your levels are consistent throughout the day, your eating patterns will be, too. But when you starve yourself for hours, cravings call. And you will answer.

"Your **blood sugar** can fall too low after just 4 hours of not eating," says Valerie Berkowitz, M.S., R.D., nutrition director at the Center for Balanced Health in New York City. So you search the fridge, food court, or seat cushions for carbohydrates, which will provide a quick boost.

Trouble is, fast-rising **blood sugar** triggers your pancreas to release a flood of insulin, a hormone that not only lowers blood sugar but also signals your body to store fat. And in about half of us, insulin tends to "overshoot," which sends **blood sugar** crashing. "This reinforces the binge, because it makes you crave sugar and starch again," says Berkowitz.

The most effective way to keep **blood sugar** in check is to avoid foods that are made with added sugar—soda, some fruit juices, baked goods. You can eliminate those entirely. As for foods that contain high amounts of starch—pasta, rice, potatoes, bread, or any other flour-based food—we'll admit they're delicious, and they can also provide vitamins and fiber. But you should limit yourself to 30 to 40 grams (g) of total carbohydrates at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and 10 to 20 g at any given snack. (Check labels.)

In addition, follow these three rules:

Eat regularly—approximately every 3 hours. This allows you to eat smaller meals without becoming hungry.

Have protein and fat (meat, cheese, nuts, or eggs contain both) at every meal. This slows the digestion of carbohydrates, which helps prevent spikes in **blood sugar**.

Go whole grain. Shop carefully for carbs. Make sure any bread, pasta, or rice that you eat is 100 percent whole grain. Because whole grains contain fiber, their effect on your **blood sugar** is reduced.

<http://www.menshealth.com/nutrition/blood-sugar>