



Prediabetes: What is it? And How to Eat to Reverse it.

Prediabetes

Prediabetes is a condition in which blood sugar is higher than normal, but not high enough to be considered type 2 diabetes. It is estimated that 84 million Americans have prediabetes and 90% of those people don't even know they have it!

In general, high blood sugar damages organs and tissues throughout your body. The higher your blood sugar and the longer you live with it, the greater your risk for complications. Complications associated with diabetes include heart disease, heart attack and stroke; nerve damage; kidney disease/failure; vision loss; foot damage; skin conditions such as bacterial and fungal infections; depression; dementia.

The good news is that prediabetes can be reversed through diet and lifestyle changes! If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes or diabetes runs in your family, it is crucial that you eat healthy, are physically active, and lose excess weight.

For most people with prediabetes, the body has a difficult time lowering blood sugar levels after meals. This is because their cells have become desensitized to insulin, a hormone that pulls sugar from the blood into the cell to be stored or used for energy. The goal for a prediabetic is to restore healthy insulin function through the foods and beverages you choose (and choose not) to eat.

This article will focus just on carbohydrates—what to eat and what to avoid. We will address other macronutrients next month.

Choose Carbohydrates Wisely

All carbohydrates are broken down into sugars. Some carbohydrates take time to break down and slowly release sugar into our bloodstream, and others do this quickly and cause a spike in our blood sugar. If your cells take longer to respond to insulin (or they don't respond) because you are prediabetic, it is crucial that you focus on complex carbohydrates, high fiber foods, and minimize/eliminate simple carbohydrates.

Some prediabetics need to follow a low carbohydrate diet to help shift their insulin sensitivity and will need to eliminate whole grains and legumes (along with simple carbs) to bring the carbohydrate levels low enough to see (and feel) a change.

- **Complex carbs:** sweet potatoes/yams, potatoes, winter squash, fruit, vegetables, whole grains and legumes
- **Fiber-rich foods:** soluble fiber has been found to increase insulin sensitivity and help the body regain healthy blood sugar regulation. Oats, legumes, flaxseeds (ground), chia seeds, peas, Brussels sprouts, all fruits but especially strawberries, blueberries, citrus, apples, and pears.
- **Simple carbs:** processed and refined grains and sugar (ex: white sugar, bread, and rice), high fructose corn syrup, sodas, fruit juice and fruit sweetened drinks, even maple syrup and honey are simple carbs

Read Labels

It is important to read labels and avoid foods that contain high fructose corn syrup and large amounts of added sugar. Breads, cereals, flavored yogurts/milk/kefir are examples of foods that can have hidden sugars that make it difficult for a prediabetic to control their blood sugar.



RECIPE
Spring Quinoa Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed
- 2 cups water or vegetable broth
- ¼ cup frozen peas, thawed
- 4 asparagus spears, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced (white and green parts)
- ½ cup fresh herbs (cilantro, mint, parsley), chopped

Dressing:

- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons tamari or soy sauce

Directions:

In a small saucepan, bring water or broth to a boil. Stir in quinoa, reduce heat to simmer, and cook until water is absorbed, 10 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the dressing by whisking together ingredients in a small bowl.

Combine vegetables, fresh herbs, and quinoa in a large salad bowl. The warm quinoa will “cook” the veggies but keep them crisp and flavorful. Pour dressing over the top and stir to combine. Serves 4 to 6

Your Green Bean Delivery Shopping List!

- Quinoa, oats, farro, brown rice
- Chia seeds, flaxseeds
- Canned or bulk beans
- Strawberries, blueberries, blackberries
- Apples, pears, citrus
- Carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes
- Kale, salad mix, snap peas, frozen peas, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, asparagus



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