

Diet for High Blood Sugar

What Is High Blood Sugar?

High blood sugar or **hyperglycemia** occurs when the level of glucose (sugar) in the blood is higher than it should be. Normal blood sugar levels are 70-99 milligrams in people that are fasting (not eating or drinking in the past eight hours) or 70-140 milligrams in people that are not fasting.

What Can Cause High Blood Sugar?

- Diabetes
- Pancreatic cancer
- Stress to your body such as surgery or infection
- Certain medications such as steroids
- Carbohydrate containing foods

To maintain blood sugar levels within normal limits and to avoid medical problems, people with high blood sugar should avoid simple carbohydrates and choose foods high in complex carbohydrates.

What Are Simple Carbohydrates?

A simple or fast-acting carbohydrate is any food containing a large amount of sugar. Simple carbohydrates are quickly absorbed into the bloodstream, causing a rapid rise in blood-sugar levels. Examples include:

- Regular white sugar, brown sugar, honey, syrup, molasses, corn syrup
- Sweetened cereals
- Ice cream, fruit ice
- Fruits canned in heavy syrup
- Pastries, doughnuts, sweetened desserts
- Candy, jam, jelly, chocolate
- Sweetened beverages such as regular soda, fruit juices or drinks, iced teas with sugar, gourmet coffees, etc.

What Are Complex Carbohydrates?

To keep your blood sugar within normal limits, choose foods high in complex carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates take longer to digest and therefore don't raise blood sugar levels as fast as simple carbohydrates. They are usually packed with vitamins and minerals. Complex carbohydrates include starch and fiber. Starch refers to foods such as rice, beans, potatoes, and legumes. Fiber is a part of plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes. Examples of complex carbohydrates include:

- Whole grain breads and pastas
- Brown rice
- Whole wheat bagels
- Unsweetened whole grain cereals
- Starchy vegetables such as potatoes, dry beans and corn*

*Your healthcare team might talk to you about avoiding specific starchy vegetables.

Making Choices at Mealtime

The combination of protein with carbohydrate at mealtime slows down how quickly the sugar in the food enters your blood. If you only eat carbohydrates, your blood sugar will rise rapidly. Protein will help slow down the breakdown of sugar. This means there is no sharp rise in blood sugar. Protein is found in animal products such as dairy, meat, and poultry, and in some vegetables and legumes such as peanut butter, beans and nuts. If you combine a carbohydrate and a protein at each meal, you will get a more controlled rise in blood sugar.

Tips on Controlling High Blood Sugar

- Choose foods high in complex carbohydrates and fiber
- Eat regular meals and snacks, about the same amount at the same time each day
- Combine high-protein foods with your complex carbohydrates at each meal and snack
- Avoid eating large meals with large amounts of carbohydrates

Foods That Help Maintain Blood Sugar Levels

	<i>Eat</i>	<i>Avoid</i>
Meat, Dairy, and Protein Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meats, poultry, fish and eggs prepared without sugar• Cheeses, milk, no-added sugar or sugar free yogurts• Beans and legumes• Nuts, peanut butter without added sugar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meats prepared with sweet sauces• Chocolate milk or sweetened milk shakes• Peanut butter with added sugar
Fruits and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables prepared without sugar• Fresh fruit• Canned fruit with no added sugar or sugar free or packed with juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canned fruit in light or heavy syrup• Vegetables made with sweet sauce or heavy syrup
Grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole grain bread, pasta• Brown rice• Whole grain cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• White bread and pasta• White rice• Doughnuts• Sugar coated cereals
Desserts and Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No-sugar added or sugar free pudding or ice cream• Diet gelatin desserts• Diet sodas• Coffee or tea without sugar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ice cream, fruit ice, sherbet, rice made with sugar• Frosted cakes, pies and cookies• Regular sodas, juices and sport drinks

If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.