

# Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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## Type 2 Diabetes: The Roadmap to Recovery

**The disease is an ongoing process, causing more harm as it continues. Find out what you can do to slow down, stop, or reverse the damage at different stages.**

So many people have diabetes today that it's easy to take it for granted. You get old enough, and it just happens, the thinking goes. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

Unfortunately, the idea that type 2 diabetes can't be beat is so prevalent that in medical circles it's considered an incurable disease. The simple suggestion that there's a way to cure it is viewed, by many, with suspicion. But the idea of "remission," meaning that a person regains healthy levels of blood sugar without needing any medication, is starting to become more accepted. And it's an attainable goal.

### Lifestyle Changes Beat Drugs

Back in 2002, *The New England Journal of Medicine* published an important study that is still regarded as groundbreaking.<sup>1</sup> It compared the effects of lifestyle changes and metformin, the first-line diabetes drug, in a group of more than 3,000

American adults. They were about 51 years old, on average, at the start of the study. These men and women had blood sugar that was elevated enough to put them at very high risk for an official diabetes diagnosis — the condition we now call prediabetes.

These were the lifestyle changes for half the study participants: Eating a diet designed to produce weight loss of at least 7 percent of each individual's initial body weight and doing some type of exercise for a total of 150 minutes a week — the equivalent of about 20 minutes per day. The other half took 850 mg of metformin, twice daily, without altering their lifestyles.

After testing these two types of treatment over a period of nearly 3 years, researchers found that lifestyle changes were about twice as effective as metformin in restoring blood sugar to healthy levels.

So why do we hear so much about "managing diabetes," rather than



eliminating it? I can't answer for everyone, but I suspect that most doctors are neither trained nor allowed enough time in office visits to help their patients make the necessary changes.

I'll be honest. It takes some work, but it's a very doable, rewarding, and life-changing undertaking. I've had many patients who arrived with insulin and other diabetes drugs but after making the right changes, were drug-free or, worst case, need fewer drugs at lower doses.

## Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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## A Real-Life Example

When George (not his real name) first saw me, he was injecting insulin and taking prescription drugs. As well as being diabetic, he had high blood pressure.

George had a demanding job that required him to be on top of his game for long hours, and he didn't want to rely on medications for the rest of his life. He wasn't eating a healthy diet but meticulously tracked his blood-sugar levels with a continuous glucose monitoring device. It uses a sensor just under the skin, instead of finger pricks, and transmits readings to a smartphone. He made sure his blood sugar didn't drop too low from the insulin, but didn't realize that he could use the glucose monitor in other ways.

I helped George to change his diet and watch how different foods affected his blood sugar. His levels started to gradually come down and his doctor adjusted his prescriptions along the way. George also noticed that certain stressful situations caused his blood sugar to spike and developed better ways to deal with the stress. And he added some exercise to his routine.

Bit by bit, his doctor decreased the medication dosages. His blood pressure dropped as well. And now, he no longer needs insulin or any other medications, and his blood sugar and blood pressure have stabilized in healthy ranges.

## Why Diabetes Is a Race

If you're diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, it may seem as though the disease suddenly struck. Prediabetes, meaning blood sugar that's elevated but not high

enough to be diabetes, can also seem to magically appear. In fact, it usually takes decades for either of these conditions to develop.

After the diagnosis, the disease continues to progress. Medications can slow it down, but they don't repair damage that's already been done and don't stop all future damage. That's why it's common for one drug, such as metformin, to work for a while, but then additional drugs are needed. This is also why diabetic complications develop, despite medications.

Control of blood sugar is the focus of diabetes treatment, but blood sugar is not the cause of the condition. It's just a marker, or sign of malfunction. Internally, diabetes damages nerves, leading to numbness in extremities that can lead to falls or minor cuts that develop into serious infections. It delays healing from wounds, damages arteries, and damages vision. Suppressing levels of blood sugar with drugs helps to delay such complications, but it doesn't eliminate the risks.

Stopping this destructive process is like an arms race. A little lifestyle change on your part can slow down the enemy and help you maintain your territory. Bigger changes can push the enemy back. How far? That mostly depends on how well you arm yourself with the right tools and how effectively you use them.

## How to Become a Winner

Understanding the lifestyle habits that lead to type 2 diabetes is the first step, because winning the race requires changing those same habits. The disease process starts

with eating more carbohydrates than your body can handle, which triggers production of larger amounts of insulin, followed by crashes in blood sugar.

This causes a rollercoaster effect in levels of energy and impairs your ability to think clearly. You might feel tired after meals or all the time. It might be difficult to concentrate, or you might be

forgetful or feel mentally foggy if you don't eat every two to three hours. Your waistline starts expanding. And you probably don't get much exercise.

As this pattern continues, your cells become resistant to insulin. Keep in mind that after you eat carbs (and that includes most sugars and starches), blood sugar rises, and your body produces

insulin to enable cells to absorb the blood sugar and use it as energy. When cells are continually bombarded with insulin, they eventually stop responding as they should. Then, instead of blood sugar being absorbed and used to make energy, it stays in the blood.

In response, your body produces even more insulin. But that doesn't solve the problem, and both insulin and blood sugar trend at higher, unhealthy levels. When blood-sugar levels are high enough, the condition is diagnosed as prediabetes. When they rise even higher, the condition becomes type 2 diabetes.

Other than the symptoms I've mentioned above, there is no simple way to tell that you have prediabetes unless a doctor checks your blood sugar. This is why, according to estimates by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 90 percent of Americans with prediabetes are unaware of the condition.<sup>3</sup> Yet, one in three is prediabetic.

## It's Never Too Late

For both prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, you can restore health by reversing the lifestyle habits that led to the condition. That means reducing carbs, losing some weight, and becoming more physically active.

How strict you need to be with your diet and how much exercise you need will vary, depending on your state of health and individual response. But your health can always be improved, no matter how many medications you're taking, even if you are currently injecting insulin to control blood sugar.

## Stages of Type 2 Diabetes

The harmful internal changes that lead to diabetes aren't perceptible in the same way as a rash or pain, but there are some clues.

### Early Noticeable Symptoms

Even if you consider yourself in good health, these are signs that your metabolism of carbs has started to go awry. If you currently have type 2 diabetes, you may recall experiencing symptoms like these years ago, long before your diabetes diagnosis.

- An expanding waistline
- If you don't eat every 2 to 3 hours: feeling tired all the time or after eating, becoming irritable, or having trouble thinking, focusing, or remembering.

### Early Medical Markers

Before blood sugar becomes elevated, these are signs that your metabolism is not functioning optimally and has started on a path toward diabetes:

- Elevated fasting insulin, above 6 microunits per milliliter (mcU/ml or mIU/ml)
- Low HDL (the "good" cholesterol)
- Elevated blood pressure
- Elevated triglycerides

### Prediabetes

Eventually, blood sugar becomes high enough — 100 to 125 mg/dL on

a fasting blood-sugar test — to be diagnosed as prediabetes. Another indicator of prediabetes is A1C, which measures average blood sugar in the past few months, between 5.7 and 6.4 percent.

Prediabetes doesn't guarantee that you'll get diabetes. But without lifestyle changes, it's likely that you will eventually develop the disease.<sup>2</sup>

### Type 2 Diabetes

This is diagnosed when fasting blood sugar is 126 mg/dL or higher, or A1C is 6.5 percent or higher on two separate tests. At this point, there may be noticeable symptoms, such as:

- Increased thirst
- Frequent need to urinate
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision

Metformin is the most commonly prescribed first drug, and when it stops working, other drugs are added. At some point, insulin may also be added to the drug regimen.

### The Good News

Lifestyle changes will improve health at any of these stages — even for people who have been type 2 diabetics for years and require multiple medications and insulin.



# Diabetes Drug Side Effects

As with any drug, there are benefits and side effects. These are known side effects of some common diabetes drugs, when each drug is taken alone. Combining drugs may cause additional side effects.

Drug	Side Effects
<b>Biguanides</b> Metformin (Glucophage, Glucophage XR, Fortamet, Glumetza)	Bloating, gas, diarrhea, upset stomach, loss of appetite
<b>Sulfonylureas</b> Glimepiride (Amaryl) Glyburide (Diabeta, Micronase) Glipizide (Glucotrol, Glucotrol XL) Micronized glyburide (Glynase)	Low blood sugar, occasional skin rash, irritability, upset stomach
<b>Meglitinides</b> Repaglinide (Prandin) <b>D-Phenylalanine Derivatives</b> Nateglinide (Starlix)	May cause low blood sugar
<b>Thiazolidinediones (TZDs)</b> Pioglitazone (Actos)	Swelling or fluid retention
<b>DPP-4 Inhibitors</b> Sitagliptin (Januvia) Saxagliptin (Onglyza) Linagliptin ( Tradjenta)	Stomach discomfort, diarrhea, sore throat, stuffy nose, upper respiratory infection
<b>Alpha-glucosidase Inhibitors</b> Acarbose (Precose) Miglitol (Glyset)	Gas, diarrhea, upset stomach, abdominal pain
<b>Bile Acid Sequestrants</b> Colesevelam (Welchol)	Constipation, nausea, diarrhea, gas, heartburn, headache

## Nutrient Depletions

Metformin is known to deplete vitamin B12, which is required for healthy mental function and to prevent anemia. If you take metformin, ask your doctor to test your B12 levels. It also depletes folate, a B vitamin that is best taken in a B complex or multivitamin supplement.

Metformin is the most widely used diabetes drug and one of the oldest, so its nutrient-depleting effects are better understood, compared to other drugs. The drug approval process does not require any examination of potential nutrient depletions, so these are unknown with most drugs.

## Insulin Side Effects

Your body naturally makes insulin, which is a hormone. Insulin is prescribed when oral type 2-diabetes medications don't work well enough. The medication is a manmade form of the hormone. It cannot be taken in a pill. Insulin is usually injected and, less often, delivered intravenously or as a powder that is inhaled, which can cause a cough or scratchy throat. These are some common side effects of injected insulin, which may be more severe when the drug starts to be used:

- Swelling of arms and legs
- Weight gain
- Skin reactions at the injection site, including redness, swelling, itching, or shrinking or thickening of the skin
- Low blood sugar

## Dangers of Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

For diabetics who use insulin, severely low blood sugar can be life-threatening; it can cause seizures, convulsions, or unconsciousness. Milder signs of low blood sugar (which is treated with a sugary drink or sugar pill) can include:

- Shaking
- Sweating
- Fast or irregular heartbeat
- Feeling hungry or weak
- Trouble concentrating
- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Sleepiness or feeling tired
- Feeling lightheaded, dizzy, confused, or disoriented
- Pale skin
- Becoming irritable, nervous, argumentative, or combative
- Other changes in behavior or personality

## Why Hypoglycemia Can Occur When Taking Insulin

When insulin is prescribed, the dosage is designed to keep blood sugar in a healthy range while the patient eats a certain amount of carbohydrates. In other words, the diet needs to be high enough in carbohydrates to match the insulin dose.

If insufficient carbs are eaten, blood sugar drops too low, and one or more of the above symptoms can occur. Accidentally taking too much insulin or doing extra exercise can also lower blood sugar and lead to the symptoms described above.

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## Did You Know?

Before insulin was discovered in 1921, diabetes was treated with a low-carb, high-fat diet.<sup>4</sup>

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## The Big Insulin Myth

Insulin is produced by beta cells in the pancreas, an organ behind the stomach. As diabetes progresses, these beta cells gradually cease to produce insulin. The conventional view has been that these cells die off, creating an irreversible situation. But this is proving to be a false idea.

What really happens is that insulin-producing beta cells go into a sleepy state and stop doing their job, but they aren't dead or beyond redemption. It's possible to wake them up and put the disease into remission.

## Weight Loss Is Critical

British researchers demonstrated that insulin production can be restored with weight loss, in a study of 298 people who had been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes during the previous 6 years.<sup>5</sup> All were overweight or obese and were taking drugs for diabetes and hypertension. One-half received normal medical care while the other half followed a very-low-calorie weight-loss diet for 3 to 5 months and then gradually shifted to a maintenance diet. The whole program lasted a year.

About half the people on the weight-loss diet regained normal insulin function and healthy levels of blood sugar and blood pressure without any drugs. Medically, this is remission of diabetes.

Among those who lost the most weight — more than 30 pounds — nearly 9 in 10 achieved remission, and those who lost less weight improved to a lesser degree. Meanwhile, health of the group receiving routine medical care deteriorated.

At the start, MRIs showed that participants had high levels of fat in the liver and pancreas. As they lost weight, reduced fat in these organs enabled insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas to wake up and start working again.

The diet in this study was extreme and impractical for most people. However, an anti-diabetic diet with reduced carbs can be enjoyable, practical, nutritious, and sustainable.<sup>6</sup>

## Weight Loss and Insulin Resistance

Weight loss also improves sensitivity to insulin in all your cells. This means your body doesn't have to work as hard in

producing insulin because the hormone works more effectively. Insulin sensitivity is also enhanced by all forms of exercise, sufficient sleep, stress reduction, a low-carb diet, magnesium, zinc, and a variety of brightly-colored plant foods.

## Where to Start

The basic approach is the same, whether you already have diabetes or prediabetes, or seem healthy and want to prevent the disease. It boils down to reducing carbs and increasing physical activity. However, if you are taking medications to lower blood sugar or blood pressure, you should work with your doctor to adjust dosages. Otherwise, your usual doses could lead to blood-sugar or blood-pressure levels that are dangerously low.

If you have diabetes, it's essential to monitor your blood sugar. The best way is with a continuous

### About Dr. Marlene

Dr. Marlene Merritt's passion for natural medicine is fueled by her drive to help others, and her own experience of overcoming a debilitating heart condition, diagnosed at the age of 20. A competitive cross-country cyclist at the time, she suddenly began experiencing severe chest pains. Forced to quit the sport, she suffered from extreme fatigue and constant pain for another 15 years, despite doing everything that conventional, Western medical doctors told her to do.

And then, the tide turned. A physician trained in naturopathic healing recommended a whole-food vitamin E supplement. A week after starting the supplement regimen, her energy began to return, and the pain began to disappear.

Dr. Marlene is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, has a Master's in Nutrition, and is an Applied Clinical Nutritionist. She is Board Certified in Bariatric Counseling, and certified in the Bredesen MEND Protocol,<sup>TM</sup> a groundbreaking method of reversing Alzheimer's disease. She sees patients at the Merritt Wellness Centers in Austin, Texas, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, trains health practitioners nationwide, and is the author of *Smart Blood Sugar* and *The Blood Pressure Solution*.



glucose monitor that tracks your levels throughout the day and gives you a history on a smartphone or other device. It can help you see how different foods and drugs affect your blood sugar.

## Medications That Raise Blood Sugar

There are hundreds of drugs that can affect your blood sugar by causing an increase or a decrease, or by masking low blood sugar. When taking any drug, read the fine print and ask your pharmacist about its possible side effects.

These are some widely used classes of drugs that are known to increase blood-sugar levels:

**Corticosteroids:** Used for arthritis, joint injuries, asthma, and allergies, they are problematic when injected or taken in pills, but not in inhalers or skin creams.

**Beta-Blockers:** Commonly taken for high blood pressure and used for an irregular heart beat or anxiety.

**Statins:** Taken to lower cholesterol, they can increase risk for diabetes by 36 percent, according to a study of more than 3,000 people.<sup>7</sup>

**Fluoroquinolones (a class of antibiotics):** Used to treat infections such as pneumonia and urinary tract infections, they can also lower blood sugar.

**Antipsychotics:** Taken for mental illnesses.

**Decongestants:** Used to treat colds; the active ingredients include pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine.

If you're taking a medication that raises blood sugar, ask your doctor about other options.

## What to Eat

When you embark on the mission of reducing carbs, you can do it in a gradual or more extreme way. I recommend starting with a gradual approach.

It's estimated that the average American consumes about 250 to 300 grams of carbs daily. To check your consumption, you can track all your daily food and drinks online, with a phone app, or with a combination of the two. I suggest using a free service such as My Fitness Pal, at [www.myfitnesspal.com](http://www.myfitnesspal.com), to keep track of what you consume. It's easier than manually tracking what you eat and calculating carbs.

I've found that a plan I put together, which is explained in detail in Volume 1, Issue 8, of this newsletter, works well for my patients and readers who have been following it on their own. Rather than counting *all* carbs, it requires tracking only carbs in foods that are top sources of starch and sugar: grains, foods and beverages that contain sugar, starchy vegetables, and fruit. The daily carb limit *from only those foods* is 60 grams.

This means no food group is excluded and you can eat plenty of non-starchy vegetables, eggs, meats, fish, and healthy fats such as extra virgin olive oil, avocados, and small amounts of nuts and nut butters.

As you get used to this eating style, start adding exercise to your routine. It improves insulin sensitivity, energy, sleep, mood, and will help you lose weight. Many people have prevented or reversed diabetes by following my plan. However, if you want to take

a stricter approach, you can reduce carbs to even lower levels.

## The Keto Diet

The keto diet has become a popular way to eat very low-carb. Its carb content is low enough to change the way your body uses fuel. Your usual fuel source is blood sugar your body makes from carbs. When carbs are extremely restricted and a diet is high in fat, then fat — from your food and fat stores in your body — becomes an alternative fuel.

When the human body burns the fat, molecules called “ketones” are generated, and these are the actual fuel. “Keto” is short for “ketogenic,” meaning a state where ketones are being produced as a result of burning fat.

The amount of carbs in keto diets varies, with about 50 grams daily at the top end and about 20 grams in a more restrictive plan. It's important to know that this is not a high-protein diet. Most calories you would normally be getting from carbs are replaced by calories from fat, and it should be healthy fat.

To do a keto diet correctly, you need to calculate how to get the right ratio of fat, which can range from about 60 to 75 percent of your total calories, and then work out what to eat. The easiest way to do this is with a calculator such as the one at [www.ketodietapp.com](http://www.ketodietapp.com).

One word of warning: If you have diabetes or are taking medications for prediabetes, I do *not* recommend trying a keto diet without the supervision of a keto-savvy health professional.

For someone with type 1 diabetes, there is a dangerous

condition, called ketoacidosis, that can develop. This sometimes gets confused with the keto diet, but the two are not the same.

## Herbs and Supplements

Several herbs and supplements help to control blood sugar. Herbs include gymnema sylvestre, banaba leaf, mulberry leaf extract, and fenugreek. Each one works in a different way, and some of these are combined in synergistic formulas. These herbs can usually be taken along with diabetes drugs, if a doctor monitors and adjusts drug dosages, as needed.

Vitamins C and D, chromium,

magnesium, zinc, and alpha-lipoic acid are some other nutrients that your body requires to efficiently generate energy from blood sugar. These can help you achieve and maintain healthy levels.

## A Final Word

As you learn to eat in a new way, it's important to find things you like and want to keep eating longer-term. I caution my patients that they won't be able to go back to the unhealthy habits of yesteryear, since those habits got them into trouble in the first place. Rather, you can develop new ways of eating and moving

that are practical, enjoyable, and sustainable for many healthy years to come.

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# The Roadmap to Recovery

**These steps can help you lower elevated blood sugar and if you have prediabetes or type 2 diabetes, start regaining your health.**

1. If you take any medications for conditions other than diabetes, check if any of them may be elevating your blood sugar. If so, ask your doctor and pharmacist if there are other options.
2. If you have diabetes, make sure you are monitoring your blood-sugar levels, ideally with a continuous glucose monitor, and keeping track of how levels change in response to food, drugs, exercise, and at other times.
3. Familiarize yourself with different ways to eat fewer carbs and decide which type of diet you want to follow.
4. Make a plan to see how your eating habits will be different. Work out how you will substitute lower-carb foods for those you currently eat that are higher in carbs. For example, you could eat eggs and vegetables in place of cereal or toast for breakfast; meat or fish and vegetables in place of a sandwich for lunch; replace rice or potatoes with a non-starchy vegetable at dinner; and substitute a piece of cheese for dessert. If you routinely drink soda, find some other options, such as carbonated water with a spritz of lime or lemon.
5. If you live with a spouse or partner, discuss the changes you want to make, and why, and determine if he or she would like to make those changes with you. If not, work out a practical way to share some foods but not others. If other family members live with you, work out a plan so that everyone is happy with their food.
6. Make a shopping list and buy your food.
7. If you live alone or others in your household are going to follow the same eating plan, get rid of foods that you don't want to eat. Otherwise, organize your kitchen cupboards and fridge, as much as possible, to avoid temptation.
8. Get started on your new way of eating and see how you feel. If you're diabetic, make sure to track your blood sugar.
9. Make it a habit to learn about different ways of eating foods that are naturally low in carbs, by exploring recipes online and trying different methods of cooking. This way, you can discover tasty new dishes and can feel empowered rather than deprived.
10. As you get accustomed to your new eating style, add some physical activity to your routine, by walking on most days or doing other exercise.
11. If you are taking medications for blood sugar or blood pressure, keep your doctor informed about changes in your blood-sugar levels and ask about adjusting your medication.
12. Continue with your plan and adjust it as needed to keep making progress.
13. If you "fall off the wagon," don't despair. Instead, just go back to your healthy routine and continue.
14. Be patient. Elevated blood sugar and diabetes take time to develop, so allow some time to reap the benefits of lifestyle changes.



# Get Back Out There...

## STOP LETTING FATIGUE AND LOW-ENERGY ROB YOU OF THE ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY!

**Do you feel drained all the time, unable to do the things you love because you have no energy and no motivation?**

Do you feel tired and run down... like you're running on empty, even when you get plenty of sleep?

If you're not living the active, fun-filled life, you were meant to live, please pay close attention: You can now get your energy back, boost your mental clarity, calm your nerves and enjoy all-day endurance that will make your life fun again!

That's why I'm excited to introduce the safe and natural energy booster designed for people just like you...

It's called, **ActivAdapt Energy Drink Mix**.

There's truly nothing else quite like it on the market today because one of its ingredients has been proven in a double-blind study to increase energy by 107% within 60 minutes. And even better, this caffeine-free boost of energy lasted 5 hours WITHOUT increasing heart rate or blood pressure!

**ActivAdapt** is an easy to use drink mix that contains 6 powerful nutrients to help you regain your energy, strength, and stamina:

**EnXtra** is a brand-new, patent-pending extract from *Alpinia Galanga*, a plant in the ginger family. It's a safe, natural energy-boosting compound that boosts energy levels by 107% and lasts 5 hours!

**Rhodiola Root** Extract boosts energy levels by increasing ATP, the "energy molecule" inside your cells. Rhodiola has been used by astronauts and military personnel to increase energy levels, boost alertness and sharpen mental focus during long missions.

**Schizandra Berry** increases endurance and working capacity under stress. Researchers have also found it enhances your reflexes and mental sharpness while calming you down if you're feeling anxious.

**Ginseng** is well studied for boosting brain function and short-term memory while promoting calmness. A new analysis published last year confirms it also reduces fatigue after exercise and physical activities.

**Matcha** extract is from a special form of green tea loaded with EGCG, a potent antioxidant that helps flush dangerous toxins from the body—while its amino acids promote a state of relaxation and well-being.

**Palatinose** is unique because it provides your body with a slow, steady release of energy with no spike in blood sugar—which helps keep insulin levels low. It delivers more energy and increases fat burning.

Here's how **ActivAdapt** works...

Simply add one scoop to water, stir, and it dissolves quickly and easily.

It's caffeine-free and only contains 20 calories. You'll notice a substantial change in your physical and mental energy almost immediately after you drink it... with no jitters, no increased heart rate, no blood sugar spikes, and absolutely no crash.

**ActivAdapt** is ideal if you want to regain your energy and feel more vibrant and alive than you have in years...

- More physical energy, strength, and stamina
- Increased mental energy and focus
- Greater concentration and better moods
- Deeper, more restorative sleep
- Lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol
- Enhanced weight control, and fewer sugar and carb cravings

It's time to get back out there and start enjoying the activities you've always loved—and with the help of **ActivAdapt**, it's never been easier. Boost your energy levels, bust stress, banish brain fog, and stop fatigue, while increasing your concentration, attention, and mood.

**Get Your Bottle of  
ActivAdapt Today and  
Start Living the Life You  
Were Meant to Live!**



**Get ActivAdapt Today!**  
[www.GetActivAdapt.com/NHC2](http://www.GetActivAdapt.com/NHC2)



# Milk Pitfalls to Avoid

If you've been reading this newsletter or one of my books, you know that I recommend limiting total carbs from certain foods to 60 grams per day, if your goal is to lose weight or to resolve other health issues. Such foods include grains, milk, soda, alcoholic drinks, fruit juices, desserts, fruit, beans, potatoes, and corn, but I don't recommend counting carbs in all other foods. If you're not familiar with this idea, check out Volume 1, Issue 8, of this newsletter.

With my carb recommendations in mind, one of my readers asked: Is it necessary to count carbs in lactose-free milk? This is a very good question because lactose is the natural sugar in milk, so it might seem that lactose-free milk doesn't contain sugar. But this isn't so, and you *do* need to count it as part of the 60-gram daily carb quota.



## What Is Lactose-Free Milk?

When milk becomes "lactose-free," the lactose isn't eliminated. Instead, an enzyme is added to the milk to break it down into two simple sugars: galactose and glucose. That enzyme is called "lactase." Just to keep things

straight: Lactose is milk sugar. Lactase is the enzyme that breaks it down.

When you drink lactose-free milk, you're consuming simple sugars in place of lactose. You could think of those sugars as pre-digested milk sugar, which makes the milk taste slightly sweeter than regular milk.

Some people who can't tolerate milk don't experience problems with hard cheeses, cultured yogurt, or cream, as these contain only small amounts of lactose. Butter contains only a trace.

## Why Lactose Can Be a Problem

The lactase enzyme is made by the human body, specifically to break down lactose. But some people don't make enough, and are known as "lactose intolerant." Symptoms can include a variety of digestive problems, such as gas, bloating, nausea, or diarrhea, usually about 30 minutes to two hours after drinking milk. Other, mysterious ailments can also occur.

The reader I mentioned above experienced relief from a long-term shoulder problem after switching to lactose-free milk. If this seems strange, keep in mind that the immune system can react in a variety of ways to foods you don't easily digest, triggering many different symptoms.

Lactase enzymes can also be taken as a supplement, to help digest milk. However, lactose intolerance isn't the only reason why some people have difficulty

digesting dairy. Milk protein can also be a problem. In my practice, I find that many people feel better, and sometimes get relief from long-term health issues, when they eliminate dairy products. Plant milks are a good alternative if they are unsweetened and low in carb content.

## Carb Content of Different Types of Milk

Type of Milk	Carbs in 1 cup
<b>Cow's Milk</b>	
Lactose-free	12-13 grams
Whole milk	11.03 grams
Reduced fat (2%)	11.42 grams
Low-fat (1%)	12.18 grams
Skim	12.15 grams
<b>Other Animal Milk</b>	
Goat's milk	10.86 grams
Sheep's milk	13.13 grams
Water buffalo milk	12.64 grams
<b>Plant Milk (unsweetened)</b>	<b>Exact carb content may vary by brand</b>
Almond milk	1 gram
Soy milk	4 grams
Rice milk	22 grams
Oat milk	24 grams
Coconut milk or cream	1-2 grams
Organic Moola Coconut Oatmilk	3 grams

# Is Your Doctor Prescribing the Wrong Drugs?

As you get older, you are more likely to experience harmful side effects of drugs because of changes that occur in your body. Therefore, a drug that may be beneficial for a younger person — or a younger you — may pose danger later in life. This is true of both prescription and over-the-counter drugs, including these types:

- Antihistamines
- Pain medications
- Insomnia drugs
- Antidepressants
- Anxiety drugs
- Sedatives
- 3 diabetes drugs: Diabeta, Micronase, and Diabinese

To help doctors prescribe correctly, the American Geriatric Society (AGS) reviews all the available science and compiles guidelines: *The AGS Beers Criteria for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults*, often referred to as “the Beers list.” It describes drugs that should be avoided or used with caution in patients age 65 or older and those with impaired kidney function or other health problems that could pose a hazard.

The latest list was issued in January 2019, updating the previous version from 2015.<sup>1</sup> It can take time for new information to reach all health professionals. Therefore, I recommend being proactive and informed.



1. Ask your doctor if he or she is using the latest Beers list.
2. Request a review of all your medications at least once a year, including non-prescription ones you occasionally take.
3. To help you and your doctor avoid use of inappropriate drugs, check out these online resources from the American Geriatric Society:

For patients: [www.healthinaging.org](http://www.healthinaging.org)

For doctors: [www.geriatricscareonline.org](http://www.geriatricscareonline.org)

## Best Types of Sunscreen



Sunscreens can help protect against skin cancer and aging of the skin, but not all types are equally safe and effective. The FDA is now reviewing sunscreen ingredients because, in recent years, sunscreen use has dramatically increased and

new ingredients have been added to products.<sup>2</sup>

It will take a while for the review process to be completed but meanwhile, I want you to have the latest available information. Based on scientific evidence to date, the FDA has recognized only two sunscreen ingredients as being safe and effective: zinc oxide and titanium dioxide.

Two other ingredients found in some sunscreens — PABA and trolamine salicylate — pose safety problems, according to the agency. For other sunscreen ingredients, the FDA is collecting more information about their safety and efficacy.

There are two types of sun rays that sunscreen should block: UVB rays that cause sunburn, and UVA rays that also cause damage but don't turn the skin red.

Some sunscreens block only, or mostly UVB rays. Products labelled “broad spectrum” should block both UVB and UVA, but the degree of blockage is not always evident from product labels. That's part of the reason for the FDA review.

The simplest thing to do is use sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide. These are safe and block both types of harmful UV rays.

1 The 2019 American Geriatrics Society Beers Criteria® Update Expert Panel. “American Geriatrics Society 2019 Updated AGS Beers Criteria® for Potentially Inappropriate Medication Use in Older Adults.” J Am Geriatr Soc. 2019 Jan 29. doi: 10.1111/jgs.15767. [Epub ahead of print] 2 FDA advances new proposed regulation to make sure that sunscreens are safe and effective. [www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm631736.htm](http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm631736.htm).

# Say “Good Bye” to those Senior Moments

## PREVENT, STOP, AND REVERSE MEMORY LOSS & DEMENTIA FOR LIFE!

“Within two weeks my memory came back, and the confusion I had experienced went away. It was a miracle.”

— Cathy D. Carson City, NV

Do you turn to jelly when you try to remember someone's name... someone you've known for a long time? Maybe it's suddenly asking yourself, 'WHERE AM I?' when you're at a store... or you have to take a few extra moments to add 100 to 75.

Perhaps you're suddenly feeling bored when you're the most excited person on the planet. Are you repeating yourself like a broken record? Maybe you don't seem like your normal super-focused self.

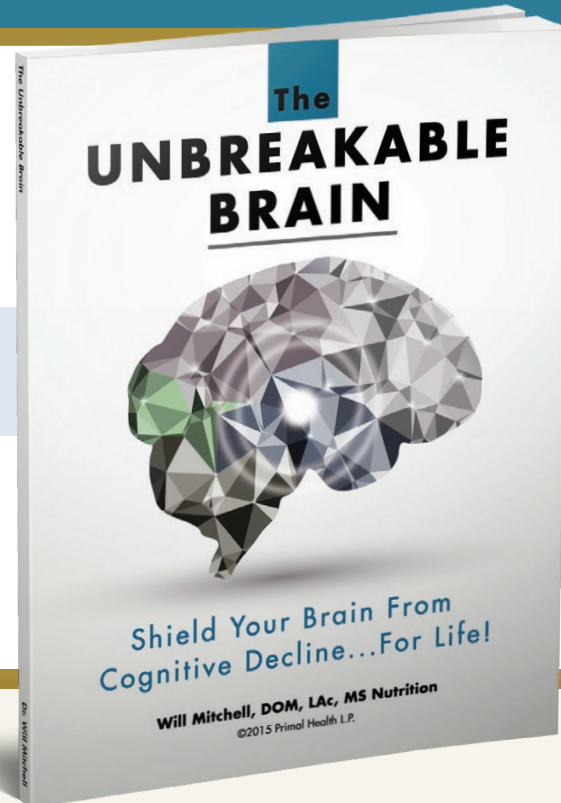
Yes—these are senior moments...and they are the first signs of dementia. The Alzheimer's Association recently admitted it, “Memory loss that disrupts daily life may be a symptom of dementia.”

How long will these “senior moments” continue? If you think memory loss will “go away” like a bad case of the flu... think again. They won't... unless you start taking some simple steps.

That is why world-renowned brain expert Dr. Will Mitchell has recently released his best-selling book, **The Unbreakable Brain**. This simple, but powerful 121-page book gives you a 28-day plan for brain health you can start right away. The plan gives you 7 powerful strategies you can easily adopt, and in the next 4 weeks, you'll be able to...

- Protect your brain
- Keep your mind razor-sharp for as long as you live
- And keep your independence by not spending your final days in a facility.

Here's what Cathy D. from Carson City, NV wrote to Dr. Mitchell after reading **The Unbreakable Brain**, “Within two weeks my memory came back, and the confusion I had experienced went away. It was a miracle.”



Yes—in just 2 week's Cathy's memory was back! Its results like this that have made **The Unbreakable Brain** a national best-seller. It's even popular in the medical community. Beverly C. from West

Des Moines, IA wrote to say, “I took your book to my doctor's office, and he knew of it and said it was one of the best. My doctor is on board with this plan.”



Renowned Health  
Expert, Dr. Will Mitchell

Dr. Will Mitchell put everything you need to prevent and even fight dementia in this easy-to-read book. In addition to his 28-day plan to a sharper brain, you'll also find...

- 1 simple trick to finding the true cause of your memory loss—and how to fix it...
- 14 prescription drugs that kill your memory...
- 5 things your brain needs every day to super-boost memory...
- Complete list of inexpensive nutritional supplements that revive the brain...
- At-home test that reveals if you'll get full-blown dementia...

Over 180,000 copies **The Unbreakable Brain** have already been sold to folks like Dorothy from Shelton, WA. who said, “I am delighted with my results, and I would highly recommend this book to anyone struggling with memory problems as they age.”

**Get your copy of The Unbreakable Brain today and protect your brain in just 28-days!**

**Get The Unbreakable Brain for Just \$27!**  
**[www.SimpleBrainFix.com/NHC2](http://www.SimpleBrainFix.com/NHC2)**



# Q&A

**Q: I'm trying to lose weight, so I'm trying to stay away from desserts. Are bananas a good dessert alternative? — Andrew J.**

**A:** The short answer is, it depends on what else you're eating and your body's ability to deal with carbs. I've found that eating too many carbs, for years, is the biggest reason we gain weight as we get older, and reducing carbs is key for healthy weight loss. Bananas are a nutritious fruit, but one banana contains about 30 grams of carbs, which is a lot.

My recommendation is to eat no more than 60 grams of carbs daily from the carb-rich foods that are so common today: grains, starchy vegetables, legumes, sweet drinks, desserts, and fruit. (Details about my plan are in Volume 1, Issue 8, of this newsletter.) One banana delivers half that daily total.

If fruit appeals to you, strawberries, blackberries, or raspberries are better choices. They're full of nutrients with fewer carbs. In addition, these berries contain proportionally more fiber than bananas, and the fiber is satiating and good for your digestion.

Here's a quick comparison:

- One banana: 30 grams of carbs; 3 grams of fiber.
- Strawberries, ½ cup: 6 grams of carbs; 3 grams of fiber.
- Blackberries or raspberries, ½ cup: 7.5 grams of carbs; 4 grams of fiber.

If you're looking for a richer dessert than simply berries, you could add a tablespoon of heavy cream. It contains nearly zero carbs (0.4 grams).

**Q: I've been using stevia in place of sugar for a few months and haven't missed the sugar at all. Suddenly, I've started getting headaches. Could the stevia be causing my headaches? — Arden B.**

**A:** If you have been using the identical stevia product for a few months and had no problem, then it's unlikely to suddenly cause headaches. However, not all stevia products are created equal. If you switched your stevia sweetener and then started getting headaches, the two could be related.

Although many stevia products are marketed as "natural" sweeteners, some may contain chemical additives. There is no legal definition of "natural," so it can be misleading. One stevia product may simply be a dried form of the plant — I consider that a natural form — while another may be highly processed.

Two substances in stevia give it sweetness: stevioside and rebaudioside. In addition to being sweet, stevioside is also bitter. To avoid bitterness, some stevia sweeteners are extracts of only rebaudioside. Others may be extracts of both substances.

In either case, extracts may also contain other ingredients as fillers or to improve taste or texture. One or more of these could be problematic for some people.

Headaches are not considered to be a common side effect of stevia,

but they have been reported. Some people have reacted to a processed extract of stevia but not to a form made from the whole plant.

The best way to tell if you're reacting to the stevia is to stop using it and see if your headaches go away. I suggest abstaining from stevia for a couple of weeks, because if there was a reaction, it may take a while to subside. If your headaches go away, try the stevia again, and if the headaches recur, then you'll know that specific stevia product was the culprit. You could try other stevia sweeteners and see how things go.

If stevia doesn't turn out to be causing a problem, see if you introduced some foods shortly before the headaches began. Try eliminating them and, if the headaches disappear, reintroduce one food at a time and see what happens. This process takes a while but it's well worth the effort.

## Do you have a question for Dr. Marlene?

Send your health-related questions to [drmarlene@naturalhealthconnections.com](mailto:drmarlene@naturalhealthconnections.com). Please include your first name and the initial of your last name. Although she cannot answer each question directly, Dr. Marlene will select a few in each newsletter and will address other questions and concerns in articles in future issues. Answers are intended for educational purposes only and should not be viewed as medical advice. If you need help with your subscription or have questions about Primal Health supplements, email [support@primalhealthlp.com](mailto:support@primalhealthlp.com) or call 877-300-7849.