

# Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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## The Diabetic's Guide to Eating Carbs

**How to eat carbs to prevent type 2 diabetes and, if you have the disease, to reduce or eliminate your need for medications, avoid complications, and perhaps reverse the condition.**

Type 2 diabetes is a debilitating disease, but there's one thing about it that offers hope: You have a great deal of control over your risk. And if the disease has already developed, you can do a tremendous amount to slow its path and, in many cases, reverse it.

I routinely see patients who either have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes or are almost at that point — with blood sugar that is elevated but not quite high enough to be classified as diabetic. In both these situations, as my patients learn a new way of eating, they begin to reverse the disease process.

My experience and research studies show that an overabundance of unhealthy carbs drives the development of type 2 diabetes. That's why this article focuses on carbs.

If you've been reading my newsletter or books, you know that I recommend limiting carbs only from certain types of foods — the most problematic ones. I've included a snapshot on page 7.

In this issue, I want to drill down further into the subject of carbs. I want you to have a deeper understanding of why carbs can be a huge problem and why anyone with diabetes simply cannot take a "business as usual" approach to carb-rich foods. The same holds true for anyone at risk for the disease. Unfortunately, that includes most people.

### America's Broken Metabolism

Here's the basic problem: Your body is built to digest real food and use it for energy. But for decades, our food has grown further and further from what nature intended us to eat, and we've been eating too much of the wrong things. The result is a broken metabolism.

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:  
Intermittent Fasting:  
Is It Right for You?**

My patients find this analogy very helpful: Imagine that you start out in life with a bank account of carb points that you can spend. Most of us have woefully overdrawn that account. And our broken internal system is no longer able to use even healthy carbs properly for energy. That's what leads to and perpetuates diabetes.

How did we get here? By eating too many refined grains and too much sugar, we broke the mechanism that enables us to use

carbs for sustenance. And now, even nutritious carbs — which are natively healthy foods — lead to weight gain, elevated blood sugar, and diabetes.

Another way of saying this is that the refining and processing of food has made us sick. You might think that this is a modern development, given the growth of industrial food manufacturing in recent decades, but it's happened before.

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## Do You Like Red Meat?

Check out *The Diabetic's Guide to Eating Meat*, Volume 2, Issue 2, of this newsletter. To access it, log in at [www.NaturalHealthConnections.com](http://www.NaturalHealthConnections.com).

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## A Shocking History Lesson

History is helpful when it can teach us about the diets of people who lived long, healthy lives while eating a certain way. One such situation, perhaps surprisingly, existed in mid-Victorian England between 1850 and 1880.

We usually think that human lifespans were much shorter in those days than they really were. Infant mortality was a huge problem back then. But anyone who lived to the age of 5 was likely to live as long as we do with one big difference: Their rate of chronic degenerative diseases — such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer — was only 10 percent of what it is today.<sup>1</sup>

At that time, many people had moved from rural areas into cities and the surrounding farm production had become efficient enough to provide a nutritious diet of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, oily fish, and other healthy foods to city dwellers. This was

the type of ideal diet we strive for today: whole foods, all locally grown, and eaten in season when nutritional content is at its peak. And all the food was organically grown because today's agricultural chemicals had yet to be invented.

The mid-Victorians ate about twice as much food as we eat but obesity was extremely rare because they burned a lot of calories. Walking was the main mode of transport and the daily lives of both men and women included a lot of physical labor.

And here's a vital fact: The density of nutrients in their food was about ten times that of today's food.

Unfortunately, this idyllic diet didn't last. Refined wheat imported from the United States led to cheap white bread. As global trade increased, the price of sugar dropped, and sweetened and refined carbs replaced healthy ones from local farms.

When the mid-Victorians were eating their locally grown, nutritious diet, workers who built railways were extremely strong. There were no bulldozers, so these men spent long hours shoveling enormous amounts of earth from below their feet to above their heads, without any problems. But after a couple of decades of processed food, that population was so unhealthy that half the young men who volunteered to fight in the second Boer War, in 1900, were rejected because they were undernourished.

Another sign of severely deteriorated food quality between 1880 and 1900 was shrinking height. It was so drastic that the military lowered its minimum height standard by 3 inches.

Dr. Marlene's

### NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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## The First Step to Recovery

We've all been hearing, for years, that we should eat fewer refined and sugary carbs. To be realistic, this isn't easy to do. The first step is recognizing that you're up against two barriers in your environment: starchy and sugary foods that surround us and misinformation that makes you (and your family and friends) think that it's perfectly fine — "normal" — to eat too many carbs.

If you're going to break the carb habits that lead to diabetes, you'll need to break away from the herd, so to speak. This can be difficult to do, especially if you're the only one in your family or circle of friends who wants to adopt a healthier diet.

When you start to make healthier carb choices, you'll probably run into many situations where you're tempted to veer off your path "just this once." And pretty soon, old habits can creep back in.

I'm not saying that you can never have a slice of your favorite pie for the rest of your life. As you heal a broken metabolism, your ability to efficiently digest an *occasional* piece of cake or pie will improve — if you take the right steps. (This doesn't mean that you can go back to eating the way you did when you were a teenager.)

If you were recovering from a sprained ankle and you put too much weight on it too soon, it would take longer to heal. And if you ran a marathon before it healed, you might cause permanent damage. To fix a broken metabolism, you have to eat the right way for long enough to give your body a chance to recover.

Another part of the first step is

learning the difference between information that's harmful and information that's helpful. This can help you avoid pitfalls and give you more confidence to stay the course with a new way of eating.

Before I discuss simple, practical ways to eat carbs to prevent or reverse type 2 diabetes — without restrictive diets that are impossible to maintain — I want to address some of the false information about diabetes and carbs that we're constantly exposed to. It can mislead you into making the wrong food choices and needlessly suffering as a result.

## Decades of Bad Diet Advice

Our official Dietary Guidelines are based on a consensus of many experts and published by the federal government, and they underlie the mainstream recommendations about what we should eat. But they've been flawed for decades.

In 1977, the federal government recommended that we reduce fat and drastically increase the amount of carbs in our diets, from 28 percent to 48 percent.<sup>2</sup> And Dietary Guidelines began to promote eating more carbs in place of fat. You may remember how pasta, other starchy foods, and endless low-fat versions of just about everything began to skyrocket in popularity as healthy foods.

Unfortunately, there were some dire consequences. Fewer than 15 percent of Americans were obese in the late 1970s, but then obesity started to dramatically increase right after those recommendations were first issued. Now, about 40 percent of Americans are obese.<sup>3</sup>

Weight gain, and especially obesity, is a major contributor to the development of type 2 diabetes, and incidence of the disease also started to rise

### 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>™</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*.





after the high-carb dietary recommendations. Since the late 1970s, the percentage of diabetic Americans has quadrupled.

And here we are: About one in ten Americans have diabetes and 95 percent of these cases are type 2. After age 45, nearly one in five are diabetic, and after age 65, the numbers rise to more than one in four.<sup>4</sup>

Then there's prediabetes: levels of blood sugar that are elevated but not high enough to qualify as diabetes. Prediabetes increases your risk for diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Close to half of Americans are prediabetic after age 45, but most are not aware of their condition.

## Are Carbs Bad?

There is nothing inherently bad about carbs, and I don't believe in demonizing any category of food. All the plant foods that provide us with essential vitamins, minerals,

and other beneficial nutrients contain various amounts of carbs, and these have been part of human diets throughout recorded history. So, why are carbs problematic today?

If you're a truly healthy person eating a whole-food diet, with a healthy weight, a strong and flexible body, boundless energy, and zero unwanted symptoms or negative health markers, what I'm about to say may not apply to you. But it can help you stay in tiptop shape.

The reason carbs are a problem is a combination of quantity and quality. There are too many refined and sugary foods in most people's daily diets. Think soda, pizza, burger and sandwich buns, pretzels, chips, donuts, bagels, cereals, pasta, fries, cakes, batter on fried chicken and fish, and the like.

The carbs in these foods — mainly starch and sugar — provide plenty of calories but little in the way of nutrients that protect against diabetes. Eating large quantities of refined and sugary foods — a common eating habit — leads to weight gain, cravings for more sweet and starchy foods, and metabolic changes that lead to and perpetuate diabetes.

These starchy and sugary foods are the ones that have broken the metabolism of most Americans. And because of that broken metabolism, healthier carbs that are nutritious but are also high in starch, such as whole grains and beans, now also cause problems and risk for diabetes.

With a broken metabolism, continuing to eat too many carbs of any kind just causes more harm. But the right carbs, in the right quantity, have a healing effect.

## What Is the Optimum Amount of Carbs?

You might think there's a clear, science-based answer. There isn't.

The basic scientific text on which many official dietary recommendations are based is the *Dietary Reference Intakes for Energy, Carbohydrate, Fiber, Fat, Fatty Acids, Cholesterol, Protein, and Amino Acids*. It's a large volume of more than 1,300 pages. And what it says will probably surprise you.

Here's a statement from the chapter on carbs, on page 275: "The lower limit of dietary carbohydrate compatible with life apparently is zero, provided that adequate amounts of protein and fat are consumed. However, the amount of dietary carbohydrate that provides for optimal health in humans is unknown."<sup>5</sup>

Yes, humans can live without carbs if they eat enough protein and fat. Some cultures ate that way because they had no other option. Indigenous people of the Arctic, for example, traditionally lived on a diet of fatty seafood because that was once their only available food.

This doesn't mean you should try to eat zero carbs. I don't recommend it because it's unrealistic. Limiting carbs the way I describe below is an easier and effective approach.

Conventional wisdom says that carbs should make up between 45 and 65 percent of daily calories. Where does this data come from? It's roughly based on the way many cultures have historically been eating (although they ate less sugar). It doesn't mean that the same amount of carbs works well for everyone today.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Are You Headed for Diabetes?

Millions of Americans don't know their real risk for diabetes. If your fasting blood sugar is between 100 and 125 mg/dL (milligrams per deciliter), that's prediabetes, meaning you're at high risk for the disease. If your fasting blood sugar is 126 mg/dL or higher, that's diabetes.

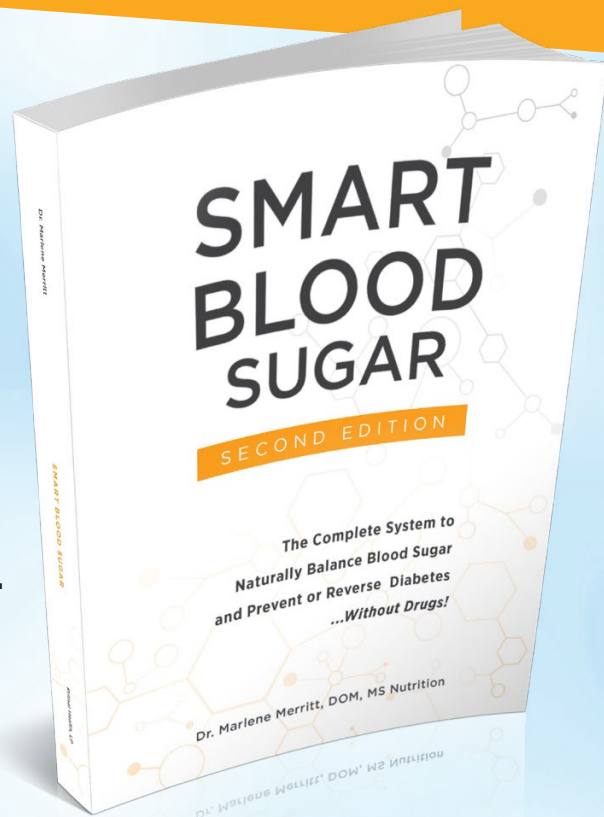
Fasting blood sugar is often part of a routine checkup, but there's an earlier indicator of diabetes risk: fasting insulin. Insulin is not usually a routine test for people who seem to be healthy, but you can ask for it. A healthy fasting insulin level is under 6 mIU/mL (microunits per milliliter).

# Dr. Marlene Discovers “Insulin Switch” That Stops Blood Sugar Spikes



This blood sugar “switch” is built into every cell of the body and, when it is flipped “ON”...

- Blood sugar returns to the healthy range
- Weight is shed from belly, neck, arms, and thighs
- Energy levels return to normal
- Sleep becomes easy again



Dr. Marlene has been helping people repair their blood sugar for the last 15 years.

Just like Arthur Mabee, who was suffering from high blood sugar. His insulin levels were so high, the blood vessels in his eyes began bursting. He was severely overweight and suffering from heart problems. Arthur's doctor wanted to put him on Metformin...

That's when Arthur discovered Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Smart Blood Sugar**. “I said, ‘Well, I’m going to order this book because this doctor knows exactly what she’s talking about,’” Arthur explained.

In just three days of using Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** program, Arthur began to feel changes in his body. He gained more energy, his memory improved, he began sleeping 8 to 12 hours per night—and best of all—he lost 118 pounds since reading the book.

*“I’ve improved my health 190%... I no longer have diabetes. I no longer have a pre-diabetic condition,” shared Arthur. “My eyes have even cleared up. This has definitely helped me more than anything I’ve ever done in my life.”*



Did you see that? Arthur no longer has diabetes. And so can you! Yes—it is possible to reverse type 2 diabetes and maintain blood sugar in the normal range.

Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** is working for people all across America. And she believes it can work for you, too. Here's how...

This simple plan works by doing a few simple things that bring blood sugar down while stopping a few things that have been pushing blood sugar up. It's a combination of these two actions that make the protocol work so well.

Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** has become a best-selling book because it cuts through all the confusing and contradictory information and zeros in on the exact steps to take right now to heal your blood sugar.

In this easy-to-read, 100-page book, you will find step-by-step guidance, easy tools, and dozens of tips on how to maintain healthy blood sugar levels and repair insulin resistance without wasting a lot of time or money.

“Get this book, sit down, and do the same thing I did. Read it word for word,” Arthur shares with others. “**Smart Blood Sugar** will help you greatly.”

It's time to bring your blood sugar back in the healthy range. Get your copy of Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Smart Blood Sugar**, today for only \$27!

**Order Your Copy Today!**  
**[www.SmartBloodSugar.com/Book](http://www.SmartBloodSugar.com/Book)**



## Low-Carb Diets

As weight gain became a bigger problem in America after the rise of the low-fat, high-carb diet, Atkins and other low-carb diets gained popularity as a solution. Today the high-fat, very-low-carb keto diet has become popular.

It's estimated that carbs make up at least half of the daily calories in most people's diets. Anything less than that is theoretically a low-carb diet. But diets that gain popularity are usually more extreme: about one-fifth of most people's usual carbs, or less.

Studies have shown that such low-carb diets effectively lower blood sugar and body weight among type 2 diabetics, and they help to prevent the disease.<sup>6</sup> But they are generally hard to follow, as they restrict entire categories of food, such as all grain products and starchy vegetables.

## An Easier Way to Repair Carb Metabolism

I've found that a gentler form of carb reduction — if you eat the right carbs — is another, easier way to prevent and fight type 2 diabetes. It's much more sustainable in the long term.

One study in Italy looked at 215 overweight people who had just been diagnosed with diabetes and prescribed medication to control blood sugar.

Half followed a Mediterranean-style diet with plenty of plant foods and healthy fats such as extra virgin olive oil, and slightly less than half of daily calories from carbs. The others followed a low-fat diet with less than 30 percent of calories from fat.

Researchers tracked these people

for 4 years and found that those who followed the Mediterranean-style diet lost more weight, and only 44 percent needed medications to control their blood sugar. In the low-fat group, people lost less weight and 70 percent needed to take diabetes drugs at the end of the 4-year study.<sup>7</sup>

Another study, in Spain, looked at 418 people between the ages of 55 and 80 who did not have diabetes. Some ate a Mediterranean-style diet while others ate a low-fat diet. After 4 years, nearly twice as many people in the low-fat group were diagnosed with diabetes as in the Mediterranean-style group.<sup>8</sup>

The Mediterranean diet is a traditional way of eating in the countries where these studies were done. But we can easily incorporate a key therapeutic characteristic of this diet into our

daily meals: eating a variety of vegetables — more than most people are used to.

## My Healthy Carb Plan

I've found that it's difficult for my patients to count every calorie and gram of carbs that they eat throughout the day. With my system, you need to count and limit grams of carbs in only *some* foods, listed in the *Healthy Carb Snapshot* on the next page. After 4 or 5 days, my patients are completely familiar with what they're eating and don't need to continue counting rigidly.

These are the key points about carbs and diabetes:

- You need carbs that are rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other beneficial nutrients but low in starch and sugar. These include all vegetables except those that are high in starch: corn, potatoes, and sweet

## The Glycemic Index

You may have heard of the glycemic index. It's a way of classifying carbs by the effect they have on blood sugar. Foods that cause a greater rise in blood sugar rank higher on the glycemic index, and vice versa. This applies only to carbs, as fats and protein don't cause blood sugar to rise.

For a number of years, experts recommended eating foods low on the glycemic index to combat elevated blood sugar and diabetes. But the system has fallen out of favor because it is not as workable in the real world as once thought.

When a food is ranked on the glycemic index, it is tested in isolation, without any other foods. When we eat, we tend to combine foods. For example, when

bread is combined with meat, cheese, or other sandwich fillings that contain protein and fat, it doesn't raise blood sugar to the same degree as when it's eaten by itself. The protein and fat in the sandwich filling slow down the digestion of the sandwich and temper the effect of the bread on blood sugar. Spreading butter on a roll has a similar effect.

The way food is prepared — cooking time, for example — also influences its impact on blood sugar. In addition, reactions to a food vary somewhat from one individual to another.

All told, the glycemic index is not practical enough to be a useful tool. I don't recommend using it to plan your meals.



potatoes. There are no limits on other, non-starchy vegetables.

- Some relatively high-carb foods, such as beans and potatoes, contain beneficial nutrients and are therapeutic in small quantities. To benefit from these, count the carb content and eat them in moderation.
- If you don't have a problem digesting gluten, whole grains can be a nutritious food. But because of their starch content, quantities should be controlled.
- Berries are the most beneficial fruits, because they are high in fiber as well as therapeutic nutrients. Other fresh fruits are nutritious too. However, carbs in all fruit should be tracked.
- As a general rule, aim to eat twice as much non-starchy vegetables as fresh fruit.

## Important Eating Principles

Vegetables and fruits are nature's medicine. If you were to eat only fresh foods prepared from scratch, it wouldn't be too difficult to eat a therapeutic diet. Ideally, you would buy the vegetables and fruits that are in season from local farmers. That way, those foods would be at their peak in nutritional content.

Fresh vegetables and fruits lose nutrients when they are transported and stored in warehouses before they reach the store. Frozen ones without any additives are the next-best choice.

Vegetables and fruits that are canned or processed into packaged foods are not nearly as nutrient-dense and tend to have additives, including salt, sugar, various chemicals, gluten, and extra starch

— none of which are helpful.

That said, we don't live in a perfect world and we all buy some packaged foods that have been processed. If you need to stock up your pantry for emergencies, packaged foods are essential. So, it's important to be aware of how nutrition labels work in relation to carbs and possible pitfalls to avoid.

## Misleading Nutrition Labels

I'm going to delve into some numbers so that you can see how the Nutrition Facts on food labels can easily mislead you into eating

too many carbs.

There's a "% Daily Value" column on the right side of the Nutrition Facts. The Daily Value is an average recommended amount of most nutrients; in some cases, it's a recommended limit — for sugar and sodium, for example. The percentage of Daily Value on the label indicates whether a food is relatively high or low in a given nutrient.

In the case of carbs, the general recommendation is that they should make up between 45 and 65 percent of an individual's daily

## Healthy Carb Snapshot

To heal a broken metabolism and prevent or reverse type 2 diabetes, eat plenty of vegetables that don't contain a lot of starch. Do not count carbs or calories in these — eat all you want. For each meal, at least half your plate should consist of these types of vegetables.

However, with corn, grain, and other foods that are rich sources of starch, natural sugar, or added sugar, it's fine to eat small amounts. More specifically, count the carbs in the foods listed below. From these, eat no more than 30 grams in one meal or snack and no more than a total of 60 grams daily:

- Refined or whole grains in breads, buns, and pasta; any type of rice; and breakfast cereals, including oatmeal.
- Beans and legumes, which include peas, lentils, and soybeans.
- Snacks such as candy, pretzels, chips, or "healthy" nutrition bars made from grains or legumes.
- Protein powders made from soy, rice, peas, or grains.
- All desserts sweetened with sugar, honey, syrup, or fruit juice, including cakes, pies, cookies, and ice cream.
- Flavored yogurts.



- Sodas, alcoholic drinks, milk (contains lactose, a natural sugar) and other sweetened drinks (unless they're sweetened with stevia or xylitol, which don't cause problems).
- Corn, popcorn, and other foods made with corn or corn flour.
- Potatoes, sweet potatoes, and yams.
- Fruit, fruit juices, and fruit smoothies.

You only need to count carbs in the foods listed above.

A more detailed description of my overall eating plan is in Volume 1, Issue 8, of this newsletter, *The Guide to Healthy Eating* and in other issues listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 9.

calories. The Daily Value referred to on food labels is in the middle of that range — 55 percent — for a diet with 2,000 calories. And that number is 275 grams of carbs daily. This is more than most people can tolerate today.

Grams probably don't mean much to you, so let me give you some examples. There are about 15 grams of carbs in each one of these:

- 1 slice of plain American bread
- 1 pancake without syrup
- 1 waffle without syrup
- 1/3 cup of pasta
- 1/3 cup of rice
- 1/2 cup cooked beans

If you do the math, any one of these would add up to about 275 grams:

- 18 slices of bread
- 18 pancakes (without syrup)
- 18 waffles (without syrup)
- 6 cups of pasta or rice

To keep this real, no one is recommending that you eat 18 slices of bread or 18 pancakes a day. I'm just using these examples to illustrate that 275 grams of carbs is a lot.

The Daily Value is intended to be a reference point, to help consumers see if a food contains a lot or a little of a given nutrient. But when it comes to carbs, even a low percentage can trick you into eating too much.

Here's an example: If the carbs in a serving of food make up 10 percent of the Daily Value, that sounds low. But here are the numbers: 10 percent of 275 grams is 27.5 grams. That number may seem meaningless. But I've found that eating more than this amount

of starchy or sugary carbs (the ones I recommend counting) in one meal or snack contributes to elevated blood sugar and type 2 diabetes among most people.

## Carb Overload in Restaurants

While it's unlikely that you'll eat 18 pancakes in one day, it isn't unrealistic for one meal to come close to the total Daily Value of carbs or even exceed it. Here's an example of carb content in a meal from a popular national restaurant chain:

- Half an appetizer of fried, breaded calamari or mozzarella: 24 grams

- 1 garlic bread stick: 25 grams
- Pasta with sauce or with chicken parmigiana: 87 grams
- Lemon cake: 60 grams
- 1 soda, 12 ounces: 40 grams

The total for the meal above adds up to 236 grams of carbs from the types of ingredients that I recommend limiting because they break your metabolism: starch and sugar. Adding another soda brings the total to 276 grams.

## Restaurant and Take-Out Tips

It's easier to prepare healthy food at home but when you do eat out or order take-out from restaurants,

## How to Enjoy More Vegetables

We tend to think of vegetables — the non-starchy ones that you don't need to limit — as side dishes. But they should make up the biggest portion of your plate.

As much as possible, try to buy locally grown ones from farmer's markets or direct from farms. If those aren't available, strive for organic versions. And if all else fails, get frozen vegetables without any added ingredients.

Rather than thinking of one vegetable per meal, I suggest buying a variety, such as broccoli, baby broccoli or broccolini, carrots, spinach, Brussels sprouts, beets, zucchini, squash, asparagus, cauliflower, tomatoes, sweet peppers, different types of lettuces... literally any vegetable other than corn, potatoes, or sweet potatoes.

Buy a half-dozen different ones for the week and steam or roast a batch of each one. Then you'll have a buffet of veggies to choose from for a few days. For each meal, take some of each, heat them a little in the microwave,



drizzle with some extra virgin olive oil, add some seasoning, and add a little protein from fish or other seafood, meat, poultry, or a half-cup of beans. The result is a very nutritious and tasty meal.

Or, make a salad out of vegetables you would normally eat raw, add a dressing with extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice or vinegar, season, and add protein. You can also add some cooked, chopped vegetables to a salad, such as asparagus or broccoli, for example.

Look for different vegetables at different times of year and experiment with different seasonings. Using a veggie-buffet approach is a simple, quick way to prepare tasty, therapeutic meals.



there are usually some healthier options. Chain restaurants have nutritional details about each menu item on their websites, and it's a good idea to check out the dishes you like to eat. If they're too heavy in carbs, consider healthier alternatives.

I didn't mention the name of the restaurant chain that has the dishes I listed on page 8 because it isn't unique. But like many establishments today, it also offers lower-carb options.

For example, its zucchini noodles contain only 8 grams of carbs. You could order these, add some olive oil, and sprinkle a little parmesan cheese on top. Oil contains zero carbs and parmesan has only 0.2 grams per tablespoon. You could add meat, grilled chicken, or seafood, with zero or negligible additional carbs.

Another option would be to add a pasta sauce to the zucchini noodles. Carb content of sauces on

this particular menu ranges from 13 to 22 grams, so this version would give you a main dish with a total of 21 to 30 grams of carbs. And you could still add chicken or meat, to make a satisfying dish.

By the way, zucchini noodles are easy to make at home with an inexpensive spiralizer.

In pizza, the carbs are mostly in the crust. One slice of a regular-crust, 12-inch pizza packs about 30 grams of carbs, and a thin-crust slice has between 20 and 25 grams. Extra-thick crusts and larger pies will contain more carbs.

### Counting Net Carbs

"Net carbs" are a popular concept in the world of low-carb diets. They represent the total carbs in a food minus the fiber content. The theory is that fiber slows down the digestion of starch and sugar and helps to keep levels of blood sugar from rapidly becoming

elevated. But in working with many patients with elevated blood sugar or full-blown diabetes, I've found that counting net carbs doesn't necessarily solve the problem of too many carbs.

The most important thing to track is the amount of carbs you eat from the most problematic foods: those with high starch and/or sugar content. These are the foods I list for counting — the ones I recommend limiting to no more than 60 grams of carbs daily.

This is an approach I've developed through working with thousands of patients. And believe me, if it's followed, it works. It's also an approach that is realistic to follow for years to come.

### A Final Word


I can't promise you that your body's ability to use carbs will return to the condition it was in when you were in your teens or twenties. But if you really understand what you need to eat, and make the right choices, you can prevent type 2 diabetes or reverse the disease process.

## Related to This Topic

These are some earlier issues of this newsletter that address related topics:

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
A Healthy Low-Carb Diet	1	8	The Guide to Healthy Eating
Tests for Prediabetes and Diabetes	1	3	The Preventive Health Scam Making Millions Sick
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Diabetes	2	4	Type 2 Diabetes: The Road to Recovery

Access these online by logging in to [www.NaturalHealthConnections.com](http://www.NaturalHealthConnections.com).



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# Coffee Brewing Methods and Heart Health

Coffee is such a popular beverage that scientists have devoted considerable effort to investigate its health effects. A large study of people in Norway reveals some interesting links between the way coffee is brewed and its effect on heart disease.



Researchers tracked more than a half-million men and women between the ages of 20 and 79, for an average of 20 years. They found that drinking 1 to 4 cups of filtered coffee per day was more beneficial than drinking no coffee at all.

More specifically, they found that compared to those who drank no coffee:

- Filtered coffee drinkers were 15 percent less likely to die from any cause during the study period.
- Men who drank filtered coffee were 12 percent less likely to die from heart disease.
- Female filtered-coffee drinkers were 20 percent less likely to die from heart disease.

## Effects of Unfiltered Coffee

Among men age 60 or older, who also had other risk factors such as smoking, being overweight, and having unhealthy cholesterol, the study found that unfiltered coffee raised risk of death from heart disease. But the unfiltered brew didn't seem to raise or reduce health risks in other groups in the study.

## Why Filters Matter

Coffee is a source of beneficial antioxidants, but it also contains substances that are believed to increase risk for heart disease by raising cholesterol. Filters remove the cholesterol-raising compounds.

Coffee that is not filtered includes brews made with a percolator, espresso machine, a French press (also called a “cafetière”), and by boiling grounds — Turkish coffee, for example.

In popular single-cup brewing machines that use coffee pods, filtering varies. Keurig, for example, has a built-in paper filter in its pods that come prefilled with coffee. But not all other brands use a filter.

## Did You Know?

Paper coffee filters were invented by a German woman, Melitta Bentz, in 1908. And her family started a company — Melitta — that sells filters, coffee makers, and coffee to this day.

Reusable plastic pods that you fill with your own coffee may or may not have filters, but you can buy tiny paper filters to fit these. Reusable filters, made of a mesh, are also available but it isn't clear whether they filter as thoroughly as the paper versions.

If you don't already drink coffee, should you start? Not everyone tolerates caffeine, some people experience digestive upset from coffee, and others simply don't like it. It's really an individual choice. But if you do drink coffee, a filtered type seems to be more beneficial.

# New Vitamin D Benefits Discovered

Hip fractures are one of the leading causes of disability and loss of independence among older people. Even after surgery to repair the hip, many people never regain the ability to function well. But the chances of recovery improve if vitamin D levels are adequate.

That's the finding of a study of 290 patients who underwent

surgery to repair a hip fracture, led by Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J. Compared to patients with low levels of vitamin D, those with higher levels were more able to walk unassisted, 30 and 60 days after surgery.

Another study, at Trinity College Dublin in Ireland, looked at vitamin D levels and muscle

strength in more than 4,000 people age 60 and older. It found that muscle weakness was twice as likely in older people with low vitamin D levels.

I recommend getting your vitamin D level checked with a blood test. Below 30 ng/mL is too low. Short of testing, take 5,000 IU (125 mcg) daily, with fatty food for best absorption.

1 Tverdal, A., et al. “Coffee consumption and mortality from cardiovascular diseases and total mortality: Does the brewing method matter?” *Eur J Prev Cardiol.* 2020 Apr 22;2047487320914443. doi: 10.1177/2047487320914443. [Epub ahead of print] 2 Aspell, N., et al. “Vitamin D Deficiency Is Associated With Impaired Muscle Strength And Physical Performance In Community-Dwelling Older Adults: Findings From The English Longitudinal Study Of Ageing.” *Clin Interv Aging.* 2019 Oct 15;14:1751-1761.

# The Most Thrilling Way to Eat Healthy!

## Feel your taste buds come alive...



If you like eating healthy, but hate bland and boring foods, you'll be excited to hear this...

For dinner tonight, you could be eating fiery garlic chicken and broccoli...and then wake up tomorrow to a delicious ham and sweet potato breakfast scramble...only to pack a scrumptious lunch of shrimp and cashew stir fry.

These meals are **delicious** and **nutritious**, and most important, they're **"perfect"** for healthy blood sugar and healthy blood pressure.

You see, we hired a professional nutrition planner with a degree in culinary arts to create hundreds of complete meal plans. And all of them **adhere to the healthy eating formula** of 65% healthy fats, 25% protein, and 10% carbohydrates.

We call it **Perfect Meal Plans** because they take the guesswork out of healthy eating.

This inexpensive service provides weekly meal plans that include recipes, shopping lists, and online support. You don't need to be a good cook. You don't need any special tools. Just follow the weekly meal plan, and you'll soon be losing weight, sleeping better, have more energy and living a healthier life.

Jack from Columbus, Ohio says:

*"In the last year, I've lost about 33 pounds, my A1C dropped 0.9 points, and my blood pressure is now running in the 106/68 range. My doctor was very surprised at my results and said they were the best he had ever seen with me (and that's looking back ten years!). I'm excited about this program and plan on continuing it!"*

And Katherine from Mobile, Alabama reports:

*"Now I don't have to worry about creating nutritious combinations for my meals, plus I'm saving time every day. I definitely recommend **Perfect Meal Plans** to anyone who wants to save time and eat healthy!"*

With **Perfect Meal Plans**, it's like having your own nutritionist on call 24/7. So, why eat boring meals, when you can eat like kings and queens—and still get the healthy results you want?

And here's the best part! You get tasty, health-improving **Perfect Meal Plans** sent to your email inbox for the low price of just \$9.95. The meals are easy to prepare, they're delicious, and they're perfect for your health. Order today!

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# Q&A

**Q: I don't have heart disease, but my doctor wants to put me on a statin drug to lower my cholesterol. I would like to try a natural approach. What do you suggest? — Heidi K.**

**A:** I'm glad you're asking. The role of elevated cholesterol in heart disease is not clear, despite it being a major target of drug therapy. People with both normal and elevated cholesterol can develop heart disease — there is no clear correlation.

When it comes to statins, there is evidence that they reduce the risk of death in people with heart disease. But this doesn't hold true for healthy people with elevated cholesterol levels.

Other evidence shows that small, dense LDL ("bad cholesterol") particles are dangerous because they can become oxidized and lead to plaque in your arteries. The usual cholesterol tests don't look for these types of particles, but you can ask your doctor to be tested for them.

Dietary changes can reduce the small, dense LDL particles and overall cholesterol. Most important to know, foods that drive up blood sugar — the starches and sugars that I recommend limiting — also drive up levels of insulin. And high insulin turns LDL cholesterol into the small, dense harmful type and increases overall cholesterol.



Stress also drives up cholesterol. If this is the case, the only solution is to reduce the stress, by changing some activities or adopting some new hobbies, meditating, or engaging in a relaxing type of exercise.

In addition, low thyroid function sometimes underlies elevated cholesterol and blood pressure. You can ask your doctor for a thyroid test.

For more information about cholesterol, you can check Volume 1, Issue 4, of this newsletter, *When Statin Drugs Can Harm You More than Cholesterol*.

**Q: I'd like to take potassium supplements, but I can't find any with more than 99 mg of potassium per pill. Why is this? — Blake G.**

**A:** It isn't illegal for supplement manufacturers to make potassium products with more than 99 mg of potassium per pill, but the FDA discourages higher doses. And so, very few companies make supplements with more than 99 mg of the mineral.

The main reason for caution is because many people take medications — some blood-pressure drugs are an example — that increase potassium levels in the body and taking higher-dose supplements would pose a risk.

It's much better to get extra potassium from foods that are naturally rich in the mineral. If you eat a variety of fresh vegetables and fruit, and some fatty fish, this shouldn't be too difficult to do. Some examples of potassium-rich foods include beet greens,



Swiss chard, spinach, bananas, cantaloupe, avocado, wild salmon, mackerel, white and adzuki beans, and coconut water.

Potassium content is also being listed in the Nutrition Facts of food labels. These were recently revised, and the federal government began requiring potassium to be listed because it's been found that many Americans aren't getting enough. Although I don't recommend eating a lot of packaged foods, it's helpful to have potassium content listed on labels.

You can find more information about potassium benefits and food sources in *The Potassium Crisis* on page 6 of Volume 1, Issue 2, of this newsletter.

## 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.