

Naturopathic Recommendations for Diabetics

By **Dr. Kendra Pearsall**

Diabetes mellitus is a disorder of carbohydrate metabolism characterized by fasting elevations of glucose (blood sugar) levels because either the body does not secrete insulin or the cells of the body become resistant to insulin. Hence the blood sugar cannot get into the cells, which leads to serious complications. There are two types of diabetes, type 1 where there is a complete destruction of the beta-cells of the pancreas that manufacture the hormone insulin.

Therefore, type 1 diabetics require the lifelong injection of insulin. Type 2 diabetes, which makes up 95 percent of the diabetic population, is caused when the cells of the body become insensitive to insulin mostly due to obesity. Both type 1 and type 2 diabetics can greatly benefit from the following naturopathic recommendations to keep their blood sugars within the normal ranges (80 to 95) at all times.



Dr. Kendra Pearsall

Books

There are two books that every diabetic should read:

1. [Dr. Bernstein's Diabetes Solution](#) by Richard Bernstein, M.D. is what I consider the diabetic bible and every diabetic **MUST** own a copy if they care about their health. I offer a diabetes program at the Optimal Wellness Center based on this outstanding resource. This book covers everything a diabetic needs to know to manage his diabetes including diet recommendations, blood sugar testing, lab tests, supplies, hypoglycemia, exercise routines, avoidance of complications, etc. I trained with Dr. Bernstein and am able to have incredible success with treating diabetes as a result of teaching his program to my patients.
2. [The No-Grain Diet](#) by Joseph Mercola, D.O. The No-Grain Diet is an excellent book that will teach diabetics how to conquer carbohydrate addiction, reach their ideal weight, choose a meal plan with delicious menus and recipes, use [EFT](#) to overcome emotional roadblocks to incorporating the no-grain lifestyle and much, much more.

Nutrition

Diet

Diabetics must avoid all foods that cause large increases in blood sugar levels. These are foods high in carbohydrates since protein and fat have minimal effects on blood sugar. Hence, diabetics need to avoid sweeteners, beans, starchy vegetables, fruits, certain dairy products, and grains. For more specifics consult [Dr. Bernstein's Diabetes Solution](#).

What can diabetics eat then? Non-starchy vegetables, meat, fowl, mercury-free seafood, eggs, raw cheese, raw butter, raw cream, whole milk yogurt, and "Bran-a-Crisp" bran crackers.

The larger the portion of food consumed, the larger the increase in blood sugar. For this reason, the diabetic would do well to divide up the standard three meals a day into six to eight small meals spread throughout the day.

Supplements

There are three supplements that I believe every diabetic should take.

1. **Multi-vitamin:** I recommend that diabetics take a multiple vitamin because they are at such high risk for cardiovascular disease, nerve and kidney damage, blindness and obesity that taking extra vitamins, minerals, and flavanoids could help prevent these diabetic complications.
2. **The following herbs and nutrients can be very helpful in controlling blood sugars:** Gymnema Sylvestre (also reported to assist with beta cell regeneration), Bitter melon, Fenugreek, Garcinia cambogia, Chromium GTF, Vanadium. These can be taken as a capsule or herbal tincture. Fenugreek seeds can be sprouted and eaten on salads. Bitter melon can be found in Asian and international grocery stores and can be juiced with other vegetables to make a powerful diabetic tonic.
3. **Two products that are essential for diabetics** are Alpha-lipoic Acid (ALA) (200 to 600 mg daily depending on the severity of diabetes) and Evening Primrose Oil (EPO). ALA is a powerful antioxidant, decreases glucose and insulin levels, increases insulin sensitivity, decreases insulin resistance, decreases levels of glycosylation (HbA1c levels) and protects against nerve damage. EPO contains GLA, or gamma-linoleic acid, which acts as a synergist to ALA making it much more potent, and it has many of the same functions as ALA especially in protecting nerve function. I recommend taking 400 to 1000 mg of GLA daily. Take the two together. EPO is more economical in a liquid form.

Exercise

1. Exercise will decrease blood sugar if the exercise is prolonged and strenuous. Blood sugars should be monitored every 10 minutes when starting an exercise routine to check for hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and test if the exercise needs to be covered with carbohydrate to compensate for hypoglycemia.
2. Anaerobic exercise (i.e. weightlifting) is the ideal for diabetics because it lowers blood sugar more than aerobic exercise (running, biking, swimming, etc.), and it causes insulin to be much more efficient in transporting glucose into the cells.

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Dr. Pearsall graduated from [Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine](#) in 2001. The four-year naturopathic medical school includes training in both allopathic medicine (drugs and surgery) and a range of naturopathic therapies including nutrition, botanical medicine, homeopathy, acupuncture, physical medicine and counseling.

Reference website: <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2003/08/20/diabetes-naturopathic.aspx>