



## **Insulin for Diabetes Management and Reversal**

Life is precious, and we all want to live our best life regardless of any cards we've been dealt. A diabetic patient is no stranger to insulin and its usefulness in diabetes management. With proper care given to food and nutrition habits, a person can not only survive but also thrive while [living with diabetes](#).

### Types of Diabetes

The most common types of diabetes are related to insulin production and function in the human body.

- People whose bodies do not produce any insulin are diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes. They have to take insulin shots every day to remain alive.
- People whose bodies do not use insulin properly are diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. Many can survive without depending on regular insulin shots if they adapt their lifestyle to include exercise and healthier eating habits.
- Gestational diabetes temporarily occurs during pregnancy because of an insufficient amount of insulin. It usually goes away afterward, but you could likely develop Type 2 diabetes in the future.

In a recent study, about [11.3% of the American population numbering 37.3 million](#) have diabetes, with 1 out of 4 not even knowing that they have it. Another 96 million from age 18 and above have [prediabetes](#) (having high glucose levels but not high enough to classify as diabetes). Why is this dangerous? The disease can easily create room for other health problems, such as heart and kidney diseases, stroke, eye, and dental problems, or even nerve damage.

To avoid such effects, we need to look at our body's biological gateway drug – Insulin. Next, we will examine how this hormone contributes to successful diabetes prevention and management.

## Insulin — what is it?

When we eat food, our blood gets glucose (sugar). Glucose is our energy source, but it needs to get into the body cells to function. Also, because we always need energy, our liver and muscles need to store some of the glucose. The pancreatic gland provides the hormone [Insulin](#) to get the glucose on its way to these different destinations. When the blood glucose enters the body cells, blood sugar levels decrease, and so does insulin production. This way, the body's circulatory system remains stable and balanced.

## Insulin Resistance and Sensitivity

However, people's bodies react and respond differently to insulin, giving rise to "Insulin sensitivity." A person with high insulin sensitivity absorbs glucose into their blood cells; another with low insulin sensitivity can't use glucose from the blood for energy and is more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes. This condition is also known as [insulin resistance](#), which affects about 38% of adults in the United States.

## How does insulin resistance develop?

Although the cause of insulin resistance is still complex, here's a brief explanation of how it develops. First, the insulin hormone itself no longer supports body cells effectively. In response, the pancreas increases its secretion of more insulin to stabilize blood sugar. But the cells continue to grow resistant, and the pancreas can no longer keep up with producing extra insulin. This leads to consistently high blood glucose levels, which puts the body into prediabetes mode and eventually Type 2 diabetes if left untreated.

## How to avoid insulin resistance

It is impossible to prevent all the risk factors of diabetes since genetics and family history are the reasons behind some cases, but other factors may be avoidable if a person takes steps to reduce the likelihood of developing insulin resistance. These steps include:

- Exercising allows the muscles to be more responsive and sensitive to insulin afterward
- Quitting smoking
- Adopting healthier eating habits by consuming foods that boost insulin sensitivity
- Losing at least 5-10% body weight for those who are obese

## Can diabetes be reversed?

As we've seen, people with insulin resistance develop prediabetes and are more prone to Type 2 diabetes if left unchecked. Therefore, the trick is to [prevent or reverse prediabetes](#) so that Type 2 diabetes would not occur.

There are, indeed, diet tips that will be useful for this. True, those dealing with insulin resistance can consume food from any food group, but it is vital to note which ones will increase blood sugar levels and the ones that boost insulin sensitivity. [Eating and avoiding such foods](#) can reduce insulin resistance. It can lessen the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and reverse it if it's already there.

### Foods to eat

- non-starchy vegetables - squash, leafy greens, and peppers
- starchy vegetables – russet (white) potatoes
- whole grains - oats, quinoa, and barley
- fish with high omega-3 fatty acid content – sardine, salmon
- Vitamins C and E - tomatoes
- unsweetened teas
- fibrous foods - beans, sweet potatoes, lentils
- citrus fruits - lemons, limes, and oranges
- protein-rich foods, including lean meats, fish, soy, legumes, and nuts
- foods that contain antioxidants – berries

### Foods to avoid

- saturated fats - chocolate, butter, and salt pork
- fried foods, no matter the cooking method used
- sugary sweets - ice cream, chocolate bars, cupcakes
- sweetened beverages – soda, fountain drinks, fruit juices
- alcohol
- dairy – milk, eggs, yogurt
- processed snacks and boxed foods

Please note that occasionally, people can still eat some foods on the second list without harming their insulin sensitivity. However, limiting and replacing them with healthier options should be the goal.

Bear in mind that following these [diet changes](#) and weight loss doesn't necessarily mean that one is completely cured of diabetes. Even if you're no longer actively on medications and your blood sugar level is within a healthy range, there's still a probability that symptoms could return. Still, it is possible to go for years without constantly controlling your glucose levels and other health concerns, especially if you have established a healthy pattern of feeding and exercising.

Striking a balance and moderation is always a key to overcoming the challenges associated with diabetes. Work closely with your doctor to better manage and possibly reverse the condition. You can do it!

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