



# Reversing Type 2 Diabetes and Insulin Resistance

by Mark Hyman, M.D.

**The diabetes epidemic is accelerating, but this is an entirely preventable lifestyle disease**

**T**ype 2 diabetes, or what was once called adult onset diabetes, is an increasing worldwide epidemic affecting nearly 100 million people and over 20 million Americans. We are seeing increasing rates of Type 2 diabetes, especially in children, a group in which the incidence of the disease has increased over 1000% in the last decade and in which it was virtually unknown before this generation. One in three children born today will have diabetes in his or her lifetime. In a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Walter Willett, MD, PhD and his colleagues from the Harvard School of Public Health demonstrated that 91% of all Type 2 disease could be prevented through improvements in lifestyle and diet.

If you have pre-diabetes or even diabetes, however, new science shows us that it is reversible through an aggressive approach of lifestyle changes, nutritional support and, occasionally, medications. It is important to diagnose Type 2 diabetes early, but it is often not diagnosed until very late. In fact, all doctors should aggressively diagnose pre-diabetes decades before diabetes occurs and before any damage is done to your body.

## Don't Wait Until It's Too Late

Damage begins with even slight changes in insulin and blood sugar levels. Unfortunately, there is a continuum of risk from slightly abnormal insulin and blood sugar to full-blown diabetes. The disease should be addressed as early as possible on the continuum. In a recent study, anyone with a fasting blood sugar level of over 87 was at increased risk of diabetes. The lowest-risk group had a blood sugar level of less than 81. Most doctors are not concerned until the blood sugar level is over 110 or, worse, over 126, which is diabetes. Therefore, I recommend early testing for anyone who has a family history of Type 2 diabetes, central abdominal weight gain or abnormal cholesterol. Don't wait until your blood sugar level is high.

## Eating Well

The foods you eat can have huge effects on your health. Eating the right foods will balance your blood sugar, reduce inflammation and oxidative stress, and improve liver detoxification—all of which help prevent and reverse insulin resistance and diabetes. In general, you should follow a whole-foods diet that contains plenty of anti-inflammatory,

antioxidant, and detoxifying foods. Control the glycemic load of your meals by combining protein, fats, and whole-food carbohydrates at every meal or snack.

## When to Eat

- *Eat protein for breakfast every day*
- *Eat something every 4 hours to balance blood sugar*
- *Eat small protein snacks in the morning and afternoon*
- *Finish eating at least 2 to 3 hours before bed*

## What to Eat

- **Organic produce and animal products** - especially fresh fruits such as berries, cherries, peaches, plums, rhubarb, pears, apples and low-glycemic vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, kale, spinach, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts
- **High-quality protein such as fish and shellfish** - including cold-water fish such as salmon, halibut, and sable, which contain omega-3 oils that reduce inflammation
- **Up to eight omega-3 eggs a week**
- **Low-glycemic legumes** - lentils, chickpeas, soybeans
- **Detoxifying foods** such as cruciferous vegetables, green tea, watercress, dandelion greens, cilantro, artichokes, garlic, citrus peels, pomegranate, and even cocoa
- **Culinary herbs** such as rosemary, ginger, and turmeric

- **Lots of fiber** - 30 to 50 grams per day, especially soluble or viscous fiber (from legumes, nuts, seeds, whole grains, vegetables, and fruit)

- **Extra-virgin olive oil**

- **Soy products** such as soymilk, soybeans, and tofu

- **Nuts and seeds** - including raw walnuts, almonds, macadamia nuts, and pumpkin and flax seeds

- **Chocolate** - that contains 70% cocoa (up to 2-3 oz a day)



## What Not to Eat

- **All processed or junk foods**
- Foods containing **refined white flour and sugar**, such as breads, cereals, flour-based pastas, bagels, and pastries
- All foods containing **high-fructose corn syrup**
- **All artificial sweeteners & caffeine**
- **Starchy, high-glycemic cooked vegetables** such as potatoes, corn, and root vegetables such as rutabagas, parsnips, and turnips
- **Processed fruit juices**
- **Processed canned vegetables**
- **Trans Fats** - foods containing hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils such as margarine & soybean oil
- **Processed oils** such as corn, safflower, sunflower, peanut, and canola
- **Red meats** (unless organic, grass-fed) and organ meats
- **Large predatory fish** and river fish, which contain mercury and other contaminants in unacceptable amounts
- **Dairy**
- **Alcohol** - no more than 3 glasses of red wine per week

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## Supplements

I recommend a number of different supplements for insulin resistance and diabetes:

1. A multivitamin and mineral
2. Calcium, magnesium, Vitamin D
3. Fish oil (1,000 to 4,000 mg)
4. Chromium (500 to 1,000 mcg day)
5. Antioxidants (such as vitamins C and E)
6. Extra vitamin B6 (50 to 150 mg a day) and B12 (1,000 to 3,000 mcg) to protect against diabetic neuropathy
7. Biotin (2,000 to 4,000 mcg a day)
8. Alpha-lipoic acid (300 mg twice a day)
9. Evening primrose oil (500 to 1,000 mg twice a day)
10. One to two 500 mg tablets of cinnamon twice a day
11. Other herbs and supplements that can be helpful include green tea, ginseng, bitter melon, gymnema, bilberry, ginkgo, onions, and garlic
12. Banaba leaf - 24 mg twice a day
13. Konjac fiber - four capsules 10 minutes before meals with a glass of water.

## Keep Moving

By targeting belly fat, regular exercise can improve insulin sensitivity, prevent and even reverse diabetes, and reduce the risk of complications. Start with 30 minutes of walking


every day. You may need to do sustained aerobic exercise for up to an hour 5 to 6 times a week to control full-blown diabetes. Add interval training and strength training to improve metabolism even more.

## Stress Management

High stress triggers insulin resistance, promotes belly fat, increases inflammation, and can cause diabetes. Practice relaxation techniques regularly such as yoga, breathing exercises, and meditation.

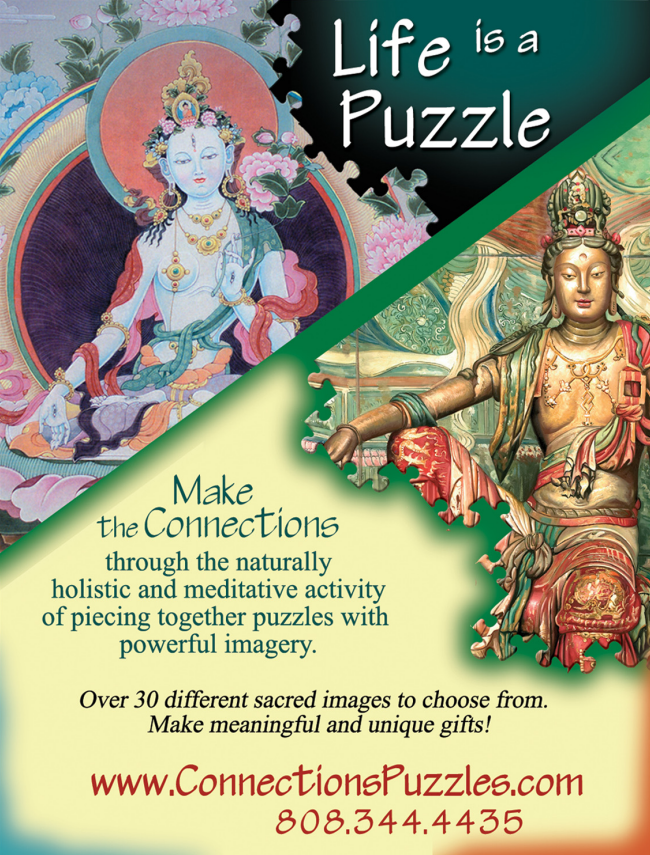
## Insulin

Insulin is your last resort and can cause weight gain and increased cholesterol and blood pressure. Many patients can get off insulin entirely if they are treated early and aggressively with lifestyle changes.

Remember, diabetes is completely preventable and often reversible. And you don't need to limit your efforts to medication or insulin. Start making the needed lifestyle changes, and you should see quick and dramatic results. 

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Mark Hyman, M.D. is a pioneer in functional medicine, a practicing physician, and bestselling author of several books including *UltraMetabolism*. Find his books at local bookstores or learn more at [www.ultrawellness.com](http://www.ultrawellness.com)



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