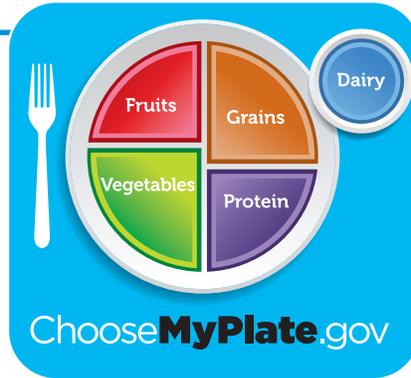


What's on Your Plate?

In June 2011, the USDA announced a new website and graphic – ChooseMyPlate.gov – to help people more easily see how a healthy meal looks. The graphic shows at a glance how much space each of the five basic food groups (grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, and proteins) should take up on a dinner plate. Here are some suggestions to help you fill your plate with healthy foods.

- Use a smaller plate to help with portion control.
- Eat slowly to enjoy the taste and texture of your food.
- Stop eating when you are full.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- If you need a snack, choose fruits, vegetables, or unsalted nuts. (They are nature's original fast foods!)
- Switch to nonfat or 1% milk, or calcium-fortified soy milk.



- Make at least half of your grains 100% whole grains. Check the ingredients on food packages.
- Eat beans, which are a natural source of fiber and protein.
- Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.
- Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean.

Get daily advice from MyPlate on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/myplate>

- Choose foods and drinks with little or no added sugars.
- When you have dessert, treat yourself to naturally sweet fruit.
- Read food labels and buy foods with the lower sodium numbers.
- Season your food more with spices or herbs instead of salt. When you use salt, sprinkle it very sparingly.
- Use oils instead of solid fats (e.g., shortening, stick margarine, butter, beef fat, chicken fat, and cream).
- Eat only as many calories as you use each day.
- Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise every day – 45-60 minutes is even better.

Following these guidelines can help you reach a healthy weight and maintain it for a lifetime.

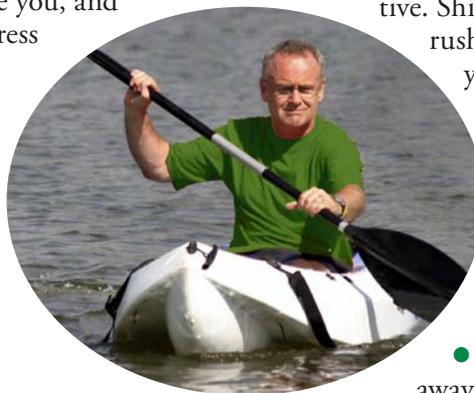
U.S. Department of Agriculture & Health and Human Services

Relax. You'll Live Longer

Everyone needs some stress to survive. It's what helps you prepare for and make a presentation, work on a challenging crossword puzzle, meet new people, and compete in a race. When you are on an amusement ride, exercising, or talking with someone you love, you experience positive stress. These stressors motivate and excite you, and are considered "good" stress. Without stress you would be bored and sluggish.

Too much stress, however, can cause headaches, depression, and a variety of illnesses. For example, having a lot of pressure and stress at work can increase your risk of heart disease. In a recent study of middle-aged Danish nurses, researchers found that heart disease doubled for nurses with high levels of stress at work.

Stress is a major cause of people missing work. If you dread going to work, are constantly afraid of getting fired, or don't trust your boss or co-workers, then stress is definitely affecting how well you perform your job. Here are some tips to help make your work life more enjoyable.



- Identify the things that stress you at work and at home. Then look for positive ways to make changes.
- If your stress is work-related, ask your boss to help you make changes in your routine. This could reduce your stress and, as a result, help you be more productive. Shifting your work hours so you avoid rush hour, for example, can help you keep your cool.
- Exercise regularly. Take a brisk walk during your lunch break, work out at the gym, and bicycle around the neighborhood after dinner.
- Make sure you get enough sleep and eat healthy foods. Caffeine can heighten your body's stress response.
- If your stress is intense or doesn't go away, see a health professional. Counseling can help you understand what triggers your stress, what stress does to you, and how to effectively deal with stress.

Occupational and Environmental Medicine & American Institute of Stress



Is It Skin Cancer?

The cure rate for skin cancer could be 100% if all skin

cancers were brought to a doctor's attention before they had a chance to spread. Unfortunately, many people don't know the warning signs, and therefore don't seek treatment.

Skin cancers don't all look the same. One might start as a small, smooth, shiny lump. Another might appear as a flat, red spot that is rough, dry, or scaly. It might bleed, or it might develop a crust. Don't wait for the area to hurt. Skin cancers seldom cause any pain.

Skin cancers are mostly found on areas of the skin that are exposed to the sun – the head, neck, hands, and arms. However, skin cancer can occur anywhere. To protect yourself, check regularly for new growths or other changes on your skin.

- Look at your skin in a well-lighted room using a full-length mirror and a hand-held mirror. The best time to do this is after your bath or shower.
- Begin by familiarizing yourself with any birthmarks, moles, and blemishes – where they are and what they look like.
- Check for anything new – a change in size, shape, color, or texture of a mole, or a sore that doesn't heal. Check all areas – including your back, scalp, face, arms, and legs.
- Changes in your skin are not necessarily cancer. But if you notice anything unusual, see your doctor. The earlier a skin cancer is found, the better the chance for cure.

Look at a slideshow of skin cancers: http://www.medicinenet.com/skin_cancer_pictures_slideshow/article.htm

The National Cancer Institute uses an "ABCDE" acronym to help you self-screen for melanoma (a serious skin cancer).

Asymmetry: The shape of one half does not match the other half.

Border that is irregular: The edges are often ragged, notched, or blurred. The pigment may spread into the surrounding skin.

Color that is uneven: The mole is not the same color throughout. Shades of black, brown, tan, white, gray, red, pink, or blue may be seen.

Diameter: There is a change in size, usually an increase. Melanomas can be tiny, but most are larger than the size of a pea (larger than 6 millimeters or about 1/4 inch – about the size of a pencil eraser).

Evolving: Over the past few weeks or months, the mole has changed in size, shape, shades of color, symptoms (itching, tenderness), or surface (such as bleeding).

National Institutes of Health

School Is Just Around the Corner

For many families, it's nearly time to get used to new schedules for school. It can be a challenge to juggle the demands of work, school, after-school events, social and religious activities, and the pull of television, video games, and the Internet.

Here are some ideas to help you and your kids stay on top of school activities and still have time for family.

● **Ease into the school year now.**

Wake the kids up 30 minutes earlier than usual this week, and another 30 minutes earlier the next week, until they are waking at the time they'll need to be up for school. Make sure your child goes to bed early enough to get the sleep he or she needs.



- **Organize clothes closets** and shop sales for needed clothes. Back-to-school items sell out early, so don't delay!
- **Eat dinner together.** Eating around the dinner table gives your kids a chance to talk about what happened during the day. It also helps you keep up with what they are thinking.
- **Share chores.** Chores help kids transition to the adult world as you teach them essential life skills. And you free up more of your time to drive them to after-school events or help them with homework.
- **Create a master calendar.** Make it large enough so you can write down every commitment – including homework time and exercise time. Post the calendar in a central place for all to see. Keep a pen nearby so people can add events to it.

USA.gov & Alabama Cooperative Extension System

Get back-to-school tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/augschool.cfm

ASK THE WELLNESS DOCTOR

Q: How can I start a walking group?

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-walkgroup.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES.

To ask your question, email: paulaw@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

Health Challenge: "Lower Your Blood Sugar Level" available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-bloodsugar.pdf. To keep your blood sugar level low – or get it that way – eat non-starchy vegetables in place of processed and high-starch foods.



Q. How can I start a walking group?

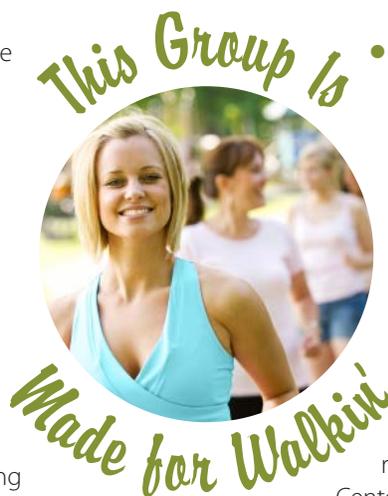
A. Research shows that exercise is more fun when done as a group. And when you enjoy something, you're more likely to stay with it.

Some people feel safer walking with a group than walking alone. Others have fun chatting with friends as they walk. Also, having walking buddies helps keep you accountable and on schedule. It's like having someone to report to.

You don't have to be an expert to start a walking group. You just have to enjoy walking and exercising with others. If you are not already walking, start walking by yourself – just to be sure this is what you truly enjoy. Then invite one or more people to join you. You can continue to invite new people until you reach a group size that works best for you.

- **Start by walking 10-15 minutes at a time.** If you walk briskly, you can cover half a mile in 10 minutes. Don't go so fast though that you get out of breath. You should be breathing deeply when you walk, but not breathing so hard that you can't carry on a conversation with someone while walking. As you all become more used to walking, gradually lengthen the time you spend so you can cover a mile or more at a time. Just be careful to increase your exercise time slowly. The National Institutes of Health suggests that if you normally walk 15 minutes a day, go up to 17 minutes a day during the first week of increased walking time. The week after that, walk for 19 minutes a day, and so on. When you reach 30 minutes a day, you can start adding 3 more minutes to each week's daily walking time. This gradual approach helps prevent sore knees, ankles, hips, and muscles. It takes time for the body to adapt and get stronger.

- **You may be able to start a group at work** – walking at lunchtime or at your break time. (Just be sure that your employer agrees to let you do it if you plan to walk on company time!) Your employer might be willing to incorporate walking groups into your company's worksite wellness program. For example, each group member could wear a pedometer and compete for "bragging rights" to see which group logs the most miles for a particular month.



- **It might be better to start a walking group in your own neighborhood.** Talk to your friends and neighbors to find a time that works for everyone. Walk together daily, two or three days a week, or just on weekends. If you walk together on weekends, ask the group to keep track of their walking on other days. Then add up your collective miles (or walk time) for the whole week.

- **Set some goals for the group,** such as to walk 150 minutes per week (the recommended minimum goal according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), or 6–12 miles per week. Gradually increase your walking time to reach your group goals. Each time you reach a major goal, arrange to do something fun together, such as going to the theater or maybe shopping for new clothes if you've lost some weight. A walking group can help keep you fit and healthy for a lifetime.

- **To make your walks more motivating, vary the route.** Occasionally walk through a park or along a river bank. Walk indoors at a local mall when the weather is stormy or uncomfortably cold. You can also add up your miles weekly for the group and, using pins, track your miles (virtually, that is) through a National Park or across your state. Share health tips that you've learned as you walk. Make your walking time a time to learn about healthy living.

- **Keep your group walks safe by not over doing it,** especially if someone in your group is new to an exercise program. Take rest days occasionally. Your legs and feet will need some time to get used to this new amount of activity. They'll get stronger and complain less as time goes on. Walk in safe locations away from heavy traffic and in well-lighted areas – especially if you walk early or late in the day.

- **Invest in comfortable walking or running shoes.** Your feet will thank you! If it rains, take an umbrella. If it's hot, put on shorts and go early or late to avoid the heat of the day. Drink plenty of water.

If you've been interested in walking, but you've been waiting for someone to walk with, maybe it's time to start a walking group of your own. Invite your family, friends, or co-workers to join you. It's very possible that they've been waiting and hoping for someone to walk with as well.





Lower Your Blood Sugar Level

CHALLENGE
Choose the right foods to keep your blood sugar low.

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Keep a written record of the days you eat healthy carbs (you'll read about this soon) in place of unhealthy carbs.
2. Read "What Is Blood Sugar?" "A Healthy Blood Sugar Level," and "What's a Healthy Carb?"
3. To complete the Challenge, you must eat healthy carbs instead of unhealthy carbs.
4. Keep a record of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

What Is Blood Sugar?

To stay healthy, you need blood sugar (also called blood glucose) to fuel your body – including your brain. Your body turns most of the food you eat into glucose. Without food your body doesn't have enough energy to function or feel well. Have you ever skipped a meal only to realize an hour or two later that you are shaky, can't pay attention, and feel grumpy?

That's because your blood sugar is too low (called *hypoglycemia*). The American Diabetes Association (ADA) lists the following as signs of blood sugar that is too low:

- ✓ Shakiness
- ✓ Dizziness
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Sudden moodiness or behavior changes
- ✓ Sweating
- ✓ Hunger
- ✓ Pale skin color
- ✓ Clumsy or jerky movements
- ✓ Difficulty paying attention
- ✓ Confusion
- ✓ Tingling sensations around the mouth

However, blood sugar that is too high is a more serious problem than low blood sugar. Your body can use only so much sugar. When you consistently have too much sugar in your body, the excess sugar begins attaching itself to your red blood cells. Too much sugar in your blood can make you tired, thirsty, or sick more often.

High blood sugar is called *hyperglycemia*. When levels stay consistently high, you have diabetes. The ADA lists the following as signs of high blood sugar:

- ✓ Excessive thirst
- ✓ Frequent urination
- ✓ Extreme hunger
- ✓ Fatigue
- ✓ Sudden vision changes, including blurry vision
- ✓ Unexplained weight loss
- ✓ Slow-to-heal sores
- ✓ Dry, itchy skin
- ✓ Tingling or numb hands or feet
- ✓ More infections than usual

If you have one or more of these signs, check with a medical professional. It's important to note that people have been diagnosed with diabetes when they have had NONE of the symptoms.

There is a warning.

Before someone becomes diabetic, he or she almost always has prediabetes – where the blood sugar level is higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diabetes. Prediabetes can damage your heart and circulatory system.

Unless people with prediabetes take action to lower their blood sugar level, many will develop diabetes within 10 years.

Almost everyone knows someone who has prediabetes. Maybe you have prediabetes. If so, you're not alone.

Today, around 400 million people – adults and children – worldwide have prediabetes. The ADA estimates that 79 million people in the United States have prediabetes.

But in most cases, diabetes can be stopped or at least delayed when you make changes to your diet and exercise more.



The International Diabetes Federation estimates that 285 million people around the world currently have diabetes. This total is expected to double within 20 years.

A Healthy Blood Sugar Level

People have been diagnosed with prediabetes or diabetes even when they had no symptoms. Because of this, the ADA recommends that you have your blood sugar checked every three years beginning at age 45. Have it checked sooner if you are overweight and are inactive, have family members with diabetes, or have other risk factors. If you have prediabetes, you should be checked for diabetes every year or two after your diagnosis. Talk to your healthcare provider to see if you should be tested.

What Your Blood Sugar Level Means

LEVEL OF RISK	Blood Test Results (mg/dL)	
	FASTING	NON-FASTING
Normal (Low risk)	70-99	less than 140
(High normal)	90-99	120-139
Prediabetes (Increased risk)	100-125	140-199
Diabetes (High Risk)	126+	200+

If your blood sugar is not high, good for you – and do what you can to keep it that way! If it is high, do whatever you can to lower it. By making lifestyle changes, some people with diabetes have actually been able to lower their blood sugar to a normal level.

Here's what the ADA and the Harvard School of Public Health recommend you do to lower your risk of developing diabetes:

- 1. Keep your weight healthy.** If you are overweight, losing even 10-15 pounds can greatly cut your risk of diabetes.
- 2. Get regular exercise.** Aim for 30-60 minutes of moderate exercise such as brisk walking most days of the week, preferably daily.
- 3. Don't smoke.** In Harvard's Health Professional Follow-up Study, men who smoked were 92% more likely to develop diabetes.
- 4. Choose healthy fats.** Eating saturated fats (e.g., butter, sour cream, and meats) and trans fats (e.g., stick margarine and shortening) increases your risk for diabetes. In place of these fats, choose healthy fats such as vegetable oils (e.g., canola, olive, and soy), trans fat-free margarines, nuts, and trans fat-free baked goods. (Read food labels).
- 5. Avoid unhealthy carbohydrates (carbs).** Refined carbs are in any food that's been processed: white rice, white bread, and, of course, soft drinks, cookies, pastries, and snack foods. Instead, eat whole grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, and nuts.



What's a Healthy Carb?

Almost everything you eat is a carb: cookies, soft drinks, even vegetables, fruits, and seeds. But not all carbs are equal.

Healthy carbs help keep blood sugar levels normal. Unhealthy carbs can cause your blood sugar level to rise quickly. When that happens, your pancreas releases a lot of insulin which pulls excess sugar from your blood and deposits it in your cells. In a matter of minutes, your blood sugar level crashes. That's what can cause you to feel sleepy, grouchy, and hungry.

So how can you tell a healthy carb from an unhealthy one? Researchers developed the *glycemic index* to help measure the effect of carbs on a person's blood sugar. Foods with a high glycemic index are quickly changed into sugar and absorbed in the body.

Refined foods – such as white bread and pasta, white rice, chips, and pastries – have a high glycemic index. That's because processing removes most of the fiber from a food. And fiber is what helps keep your blood sugar level in the healthy range. Some starchy foods like corn and potatoes quickly raise blood sugar levels after they are eaten. Unrefined foods – legumes, whole grains, fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds – have lots of fiber and a low glycemic index.

What the glycemic index doesn't tell you is how many carbohydrates there are in each serving. That's where the *glycemic load* chart comes in. It takes into account both the type and amount of carbs in each food. Most likely, if you follow the **Eat More of These and Eat Less of These** food lists (on the next page), you can keep your blood sugar level on track.

If you're serious about lowering your blood sugar, take steps to change the way you eat. Then decide if there are other lifestyle changes you'll need to make. For more help, talk with your doctor or nutritionist.

Read more about Glycemic Index from the American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/planning-meals/the-glycemic-index-of-foods.html



See the University of Sydney's comprehensive list of glycemic index foods. www.glycemicindex.com

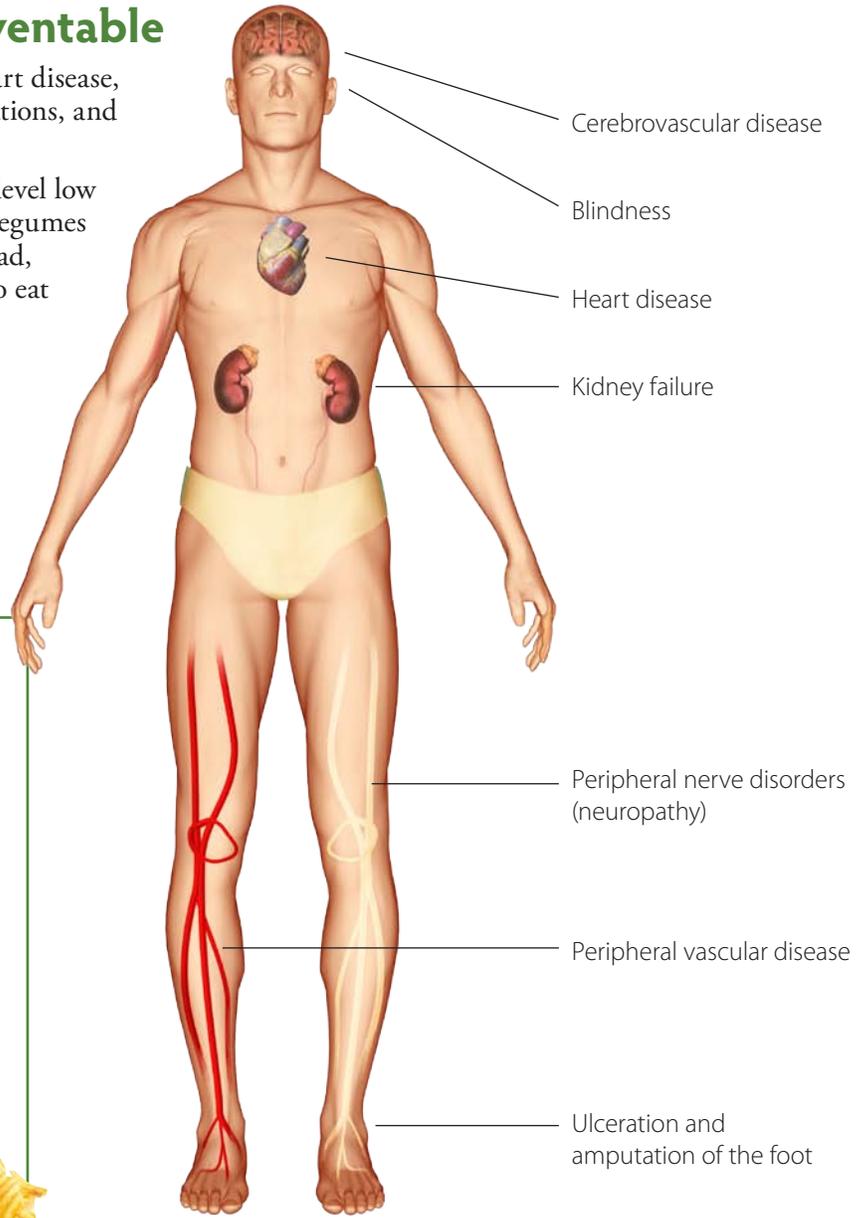


Diabetes – Serious But Preventable

Diabetes is a serious disease that can lead to heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, nerve disease, amputations, and even death.

To lower your blood sugar level – or keep your level low – eat more whole-grain breads and cereals and legumes (e.g., beans, lentils, and peas) and less white bread, white pasta, white rice, and white potatoes. Also eat 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Start your day with oatmeal or granola topped with berries and chopped nuts. For lunch, make a sandwich using whole-grain pita bread stuffed with hummus, tomato, avocado, and cucumber. Try lentil stew on brown rice for dinner. If you get hungry for a snack, munch on carrot sticks, rye crisps, or orange wedges.



Eat More of These

- Fresh fruits
- Vegetables and salads
- Legumes: peas, beans, garbanzos, tofu, soy
- Nuts
- Whole-grain bread and cereals including oatmeal and brown rice
- Protein foods: eggs, fish, skinless poultry, lean meats, meat alternates, nonfat or low-fat milk
- Healthy fats including olives and avocado



Eat Less of These

- Snack foods
- Fast foods
- Pastry, cookies, cake
- Sweets
- Sugary drinks
- White bread and white rice
- Refined carbohydrates in general
- White potatoes and French fries



See what foods have a low glycemic load: www.ajcn.org/content/76/1/5.full.pdf+html

Sources:

American Diabetes Association; Harvard School of Public Health, International Diabetes Federation; National Institutes of Health.





Lower Your Blood Sugar Level

CHALLENGE
Choose the right foods to keep your blood sugar low.

Instructions

1. Post the Health Challenge Calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. To complete the Challenge, you must eat healthy carbs in place of processed and high-starch foods. Use this calendar to keep track.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you replaced unhealthy carbs with healthy carbs. You must meet this goal on at least 22 days during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this health practice for a lifetime of best health!
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC <input type="checkbox"/>								
ex. min. _____								
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ex. min. _____								

_____ Number of days this month I ate low-glycemic foods to lower my blood sugar

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

