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The Benefits Of An Insulin Control Dietary Lifestyle

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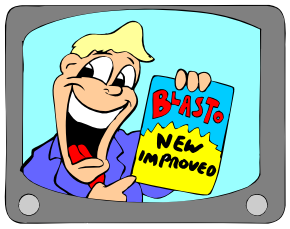
For those who are not familiar with the benefits of maintaining stable blood sugar with an "insulin control" dietary lifestyle, this information could change your life. Diabetics (those with sugar) are not the only people that benefit from this dietary approach. Using the correct combination of macronutrients (carbohydrates, protein and fat) will create stable blood sugar and dietary insulin control. Why is this important? Well, for those with diabetes this knowledge is imperative in being able to manage their illness successfully. But, the rest of the population can reap the perceived bonuses of making correct food choices. If your dietary goals consist of reducing body fat, lowering cardiac risk factors and/or manifesting anti-aging then this is the plan you must learn and implement into your lifestyle. The great thing about this positive lifestyle change is that you don't have to go hungry to achieve dramatic results. Learning the proper choices and understanding the reasoning behind them can set you on your way to becoming a new and improved person with more energy and vitality.



The key in understanding this is recognizing what hormonal function you are trying to manipulate in your favor with stable blood sugar and adequate dietary protein. What we are trying to achieve is positive dietary balance. This is achieved by the control of the insulin/glucagon axis. Both insulin and glucagon are produced in the pancreas. Insulin is responsive to primarily high glycemic carbohydrates (refined sugar, white flour, potatoes and rice etc.) in the diet where glucagon is stimulated by dietary protein. When we consume a meal that is fraught with for instance, white bread and potatoes, we invite the secreted response of insulin. In medical terms this is called the "post-priandle" response to food. High glycemic carbohydrates of this nature raise blood sugar levels, which will solicit an insulin response thus quickly creating an "insulin spike." Our new eating strategy is designed to avoid this. Why avoid insulin spikes? Insulin is the hormone that drives nutrients into cells and also is a fat storage hormone. Who wants to eat wrong and place one's body in fat storage mode?

Remember, fluid intake should not contain sugar and we should minimize caffeine. Be careful, many juices contain a lot of sugar; however, skim and 1% milk are sound choices.

Well, if protein promotes the secretion of glucagon, why not just eat protein? Again, the key here is understanding dietary balance which also includes proper fats and primarily low glycemic (berries, green vegetables, tomatoes, legumes, 100% whole grain products and many fruits, etc.) carbohydrates. Eliminating carbohydrates or having too low amounts of can put the body in benign dietary ketosis and deprives the brain of its needs. The key is consuming a moderate amount of carbohydrates from the low glycemic index with lean protein and primarily monounsaturated (good) fats. Olive oil, peanut oil and assorted nuts are some examples of good fats.

Insulin Control Triangle

Monounsaturated Fats
- *Cashews*
- *peanuts*
- *almonds*
- *olive oil*
- *peanut oil*

Low Fat Protein
- *Lean cuts of meat*
- *Poultry*
- *Fish*
- *Eggs*
- *Cottage cheese*
- *Tofu*
- *Whey*

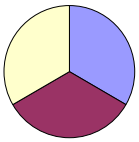
Primarily Low Glycemic Carbs
- *Grapefruit, oranges*
- *Grapes*
- *Most berries*
- *Most green vegetables*
- *Tomatoes*
- *Kidney beans*

Plums, peaches, apples, nectarines

What are some good sources of low fat protein and how much should one consume? There are many good sources of delicious low fat protein: lean red meat, cottage cheese, soy products, fish, poultry, whey protein meet the low fat requirement. The most difficult aspect of correct low fat protein consumption is how much? Determining your daily protein intake should be based on two factors: how much lean body mass you have and how active you are. What is lean body mass? If you know what your approximate percent body fat is you can calculate your lean body mass (LBM). From your percentage of body fat you can figure out your pounds of overall body fat. When you subtract this from your overall weight, the remainder is your (LBM). Take this number and multiply by a number of .5 (sedentary) to 1.0 (extremely active) or .75 if you are somewhere in between. That number will be your daily protein requirement. Here is an example:

200 lb male/ 20 % body fat who is moderately active
200 lbs. – 40 lbs. of body fat = 160 lbs. of (LBM) x .75 = 120 grams of protein per day

Once one knows their protein allotment, then it is better to consume it in 4-6 meals and/or snacks rather then in three settings. This means waiting approximately 3-4 hours between eating which is comfortably easy when blood sugar is stable. Protein servings should stay generally under 50 grams per meal. Usually, 4 oz of lean meat or chicken equal approximately 30 grams and 6 oz of fish is about 30 grams of protein.

How does one go about setting up a meal to manifest dietary insulin control? The simple way is to take one's plate and divide it in thirds. One third should be a portion of lean protein like a chicken breast. Another third could be a moderate serving of a low glycemic vegetable, for instance broccoli or a serving of legumes like kidney beans. The final third would be a serving of low glycemic fruit such as maybe an apple or a whole grain product like a slice of whole wheat bread. Personally, I don't eat vegetables at breakfast unless I put them in an omelet. So, I generally have a protein portion such as cottage cheese or eggs with a healthy portion of low glycemic fruit. Sometimes I have some tomato juice as a morning vegetable. See, this isn't complicated. If you are following the glycemic index, try to keep carbohydrate choices below 50 on the chart.

In this lifestyle, you moderate caloric intake with reasonable portioning versus counting calories. When you combine calorie moderation with insulin control, one can lose excess body fat especially if one implements the other two sides of the health triangle which consists of low impact cardio and resistance training. The key to this is consistency, discipline and the implementation of a "cheat" or "reward" meal or two per week to enhance compliance. I normally pick two meals on the weekend to play. One meal, I allow small amounts of food that I normally avoid and the other meal anything goes. Diabetics should consult their physician about cheat meals. You might choose to limit these until you get close to your desired weight.


In conclusion, the benefits of this dietary lifestyle are many. Diabetics can manage their illness following these principles. Those who battle obesity, cardiac disease and weight issues can benefit immensely. Anyone who wishes to facilitate anti-aging benefits should consider these insulin control principles. For insulin inhibits natural growth hormone release from the pituitary gland and growth hormone is the number one anti-aging hormone in the body. You will know if you are doing this correct the first time you have a "cheat" meal, because you will feel somewhat sluggish. You should never feel that way after eating with balance, which will make this more apparent to you. Hunger is not an issue for most in this plan, but cravings however are, that is why the "cheat" meal on the weekend is a big help. Most people who seriously attempt this report that they never felt better when they eat this way.


My comments are based on personal experiences. I am not a licensed dietician or physician and do not speak for Head Start or any other organization. Any specific comments or questions about what may be beneficial for any individual should be directed to a physician, nurse or licensed dietician.