



NUTRITION

SMALL DIETARY CHANGES TO COMBAT DIABETES

It may seem too good to be true, but it only takes a few dietary changes to make a big difference to the risk of diabetes, according to experts. Best of all, these small changes may have a beneficial effect on those who are living with diabetes too.

According to a 2018 study published in American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine, “diabetes is a costly disease affecting 387 million individuals globally”.

The researchers found that an improved diet, physical activity and “modest body weight reductions can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes among high-risk populations”.

WebMD says that no foods are “strictly off-limits” but that you should “focus on eating only as much as your body needs”, as well as increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables.

Just reducing your processed carbohydrate intake can make a difference. “Remember that carbohydrates turn into sugar, so watch your carb intake”, the medically reviewed online resource advises.

Research published in Nutrition Reviews suggests that processed carbohydrates with a high glycaemic index like sugar and white flour may “increase hunger and promote overeating”. Harvard Health agrees, suggesting that “eating many high-glycaemic-index foods – which cause powerful spikes in blood sugar – can lead to an increased risk for type 2 diabetes”.

Refined carbohydrates also lack nutrients and beneficial fibre, compared to wholegrains. A study published in Mediators of Inflammation has also associated refined carbohydrates with obesity and insulin resistance, which are both well-known precursors to type 2 diabetes. Reducing processed carbs and increasing fruit, vegetables, legumes and wholegrains like oats and barley, and other foods “with a low glycaemic index have been shown to help control type 2 diabetes and improve weight loss”, says Harvard Health.

These suggestions are not a replacement for treatment or medical advice from a qualified health professional or dietitian. Please consult with a qualified expert for advice that may be more appropriate for you.