



# Six Simple Steps

## for preventing or reversing type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes means your body struggles to control excess blood sugar levels, which can harm your heart, kidneys, eyes and nerves over time. But you have the power to manage this - and potentially even reverse it. The great news? Simple, everyday food choices can dramatically improve your blood sugar control.

### ===== Quick Wins =====

**Choose wholegrain over white** - brown rice, wholemeal bread and porridge oats release sugar slowly

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**Fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables** - they don't raise blood sugar and keep you full

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**Move your body for 30 minutes most days** - walking after meals is especially powerful for managing blood sugar

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**Have a handful of unsalted nuts daily** - they improve blood sugar control and protect your heart

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**Include protein with every meal** - fish, chicken, beans, eggs, nuts or Greek yoghurt

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**Add beans or lentils to 3-4 meals per week** - Cheap, tasty, low sugar, high fibre and protein.

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**WARNING: THESE QUICK WINS WORK BEST WHEN SUGARY DRINKS, SWEETS, WHITE CARBS AND PROCESSED FOODS ARE KEPT TO A MINIMUM!**

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Modern medicine is amazing. It can save lives and help us feel better. But when it comes to type 2 diabetes, pills only control the problem - they don't fix what's causing it. This is where food comes in. The right foods can actually help your body use insulin better and some people can even put their diabetes into reverse. Food works differently to medicine - it tackles the root cause, not just the symptoms.

Change can be hard - especially big changes. For most of us it's easier to make lots of small changes, one at a time. Working through these tips will help new healthy habits stick - giving you better health today and for the rest of your life.

This guide helps you take small steps towards controlling your blood sugar naturally, often within weeks. You don't need fancy supplements or extreme diets - just real, whole foods and a few smart swaps.

***Every healthy choice you make is like a small gift to your future self.***

## Six Simple Steps to manage type 2 diabetes

# 1.

## SWAP OUT 'NAKED' CARBS

**Why it works:** "Naked carbs" are refined carbohydrates with all the fibre and protein removed such as white bread, white rice and sugary foods. They cause rapid blood sugar rises when eaten alone or in large quantities. Swapping to whole grain and whole food alternatives and pairing with fibre, fat and protein slows sugar absorption and keeps blood glucose steady.

### Swaps to lower blood sugar:

- White bread ➡ Wholemeal bread, rye bread or granary bread
- White rice ➡ Brown, red or cauliflower rice
- White pasta ➡ Wholemeal or bean pasta
- Instant oats ➡ Steel-cut jumbo oats
- Cornflakes or sugary cereals ➡ Porridge oats or bran flakes
- Peeled potatoes ➡ Keep the skin on

**TOP TIP: Avoid 'double carbing'** - many popular meals have two portions of refined carbs. Pie and mash, fish and chips, pizza with garlic bread, curry with rice and naan, toast and jam. This puts extra stress on your body and should be avoided.

### Never eat carbs "naked" - always pair with protein, healthy fats or fibre:

- White toast ➡ Wholemeal toast with eggs, nut butter, hummus or avocado
- Pasta with tomato sauce ➡ Pasta with chicken, veg and olive oil
- White rice ➡ Brown rice with fish, beans and salad
- Cereal alone ➡ Porridge with Greek yoghurt, nuts, seeds or berries

### Make it easy:

- Only buy wholegrain versions when you shop
- Empty your cupboards of all sugary and high carb snacks
- Keep low carb snacks to hand and in sight - fruit bowl on the table, bags of nuts and seeds in your bag, veg sticks and hummus in the car.
- Always include protein and fibre with breakfast

*Roast a big tray of seasoned veg at the weekend to use all week as part of a salad or in a wrap*



# 2.

## FILL (AT LEAST) HALF YOUR PLATE WITH VEG

**Why it works:** Vegetables have almost no effect on blood sugar. They're packed with fibre, vitamins and minerals that help your body use insulin better. The more veg you eat, the less room on your plate for foods that spike blood sugar.

### What to do:

- Fill at least half your plate with veg at lunch and dinner
- Explore leafy greens - spinach, kale, chard, lettuce, rocket
- Try lots of different types - broccoli, cauliflower, peppers, courgettes, mushrooms, tomatoes, cucumber, green beans, squash
- Aim for 5-10 portions of veg daily

### Simple Swaps:

- Large portion of pasta ➡ Half the pasta, fill rest with veg
- Rice-heavy meal ➡ Half rice, half stir-fried veg
- Sandwich only ➡ Sandwich with big side salad

**TOP TIP:** Try not to peel your fruit and veg - potatoes, carrots, apples, squash, parsnips - just give them a wash. It's easier, quicker and better for you - most of the fibre and goodness is in the skin.

### Make it easy:

- Keep bags of frozen veg - add to soups, stews, curries and pasta
- Buy pre-washed salad for quick sides
- Prepare a salad the night before whilst you make your evening meal and keep it in the fridge
- Season your veg generously with olive oil, butter, garlic, chilli, spices - making your veg taste great means you will eat more of it
- Roast big tray of seasoned veg at the weekend to use all week as part of a salad or in a wrap

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# 3.

## ADD PROTEIN AND HEALTHY FATS

**Why it works:** Protein and healthy fats slow down how fast sugar enters your blood. They keep you full longer and help your body use insulin better. Eating protein and/or healthy fat before (or with) carbs lowers blood sugar spikes by up to 40%. Loading your plate with veg helps even more!

**What to do:** Include a palm-sized portion of protein with each meal such as

- Fish - especially oily fish like salmon, mackerel and sardines
- Chicken or turkey
- Eggs
- Beans, lentils, chickpeas, nuts and seeds
- Greek yoghurt (unsweetened)
- Tofu, soy and tempeh

### Include healthy fats:

- Extra virgin olive oil for cooking
- Small handful unsalted nuts daily
- Seeds (flaxseed, chia, pumpkin, sunflower)
- Avocado
- Nut butters (no added sugar)

**TOP TIP:** Toast some nuts and seeds in big batches, season with spices and keep them in a 'snacking jar' where they are easy to see and reach.

### Simple Swaps:

- Toast only ➡ Scrambled eggs on toast
- Cereal ➡ Porridge, Greek yoghurt and berries
- Jacket potato ➡ Jacket with tuna and beans
- Crisps ➡ Unsalted nuts

### Make it easy:

- Boil eggs at start of week for quick snacks
- Buy tinned fish - cheap and convenient
- Keep Greek (unsweetened) yoghurt in fridge
- Keep olive oil by your cooker



**People who eat beans regularly have better diabetes control than those who don't.**

# 4.

## ADD BEANS AND LENTILS

**Why it works:** Beans and lentils release carbohydrate very slowly into your blood. They're packed with fibre and protein that also help reduce blood sugar spikes.

### What to do:

- Add beans, chickpeas or lentils to bolognese, curry, soup or stews (3-4 times weekly)
- Beans on wholemeal toast or jacket potato
- Hummus with veg sticks or on wholemeal toast
- Bean salad for lunch
- Chickpeas roasted as snack

**TOP TIP: Quick bean salad** - tinned beans (as many types as possible) drain, dress with olive oil, spices, salt and cider vinegar. Add frozen peas or sweetcorn and keep it in the fridge. Add protein and veg each day for a week of simple lunches.

### Simple Swaps:

- Meat in curry ➡ Chickpeas or lentils
- Mince in bolognese ➡ Lentils
- Sandwich filling ➡ Hummus with salad
- Try using beans/chickpeas instead of pasta or peas instead of rice

### Make it easy:

- Keep plenty of tinned beans in the cupboard - try a different type each time you shop
- Peas, broad beans and edamame (soy beans) can all be kept frozen
- Dried lentils are cheap - throw a handful into soups, stews and curries
- Explore different types of dahl - simple, cheap and delicious
- Make big batches and freeze portions

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# 5.

## SWAP OUT SUGARY DRINKS

**Sugary drinks are the worst thing for blood sugar.** They cause massive spikes because there's no fibre, protein or fat to slow absorption. Even small amounts of sugar in drinks add up through the day.

### Cut out or only have VERY occasionally:

- Fizzy drinks (cola, lemonade)
- Fruit juice and smoothies (even "healthy" ones)
- Energy drinks
- Squash and cordials (unless sugar-free)
- Sweetened tea and coffee
- Sweet alcopops and ciders

### Better choices:

- Water (still or sparkling)
- Sugar-free squash or cordials - be careful of 'No Added Sugar' products - they can still contain large amounts of fruit sugar
- Unsweetened tea and coffee (give taste buds time to adjust)
- Herbal teas
- Soda water with slice of lemon or lime

### Make it easy:

- Start by cutting out fizzy drinks - biggest change - try sparkling water with fresh fruit if you miss fizzy drinks
- Make water delicious again - keep chilled, add ice, berries, lemon, lime or ginger
- Carry a water bottle with you
- If you take sugar in tea or coffee, reduce by half teaspoon each week
- Don't keep sugary drinks at home

**CAN IT! Liquid sugar is fastest way to spike blood sugar. Quitting sugary drinks is the single biggest change you can make.**



## DIAL DOWN YOUR DOPAMINE: BREAKING THE SUGAR HABIT

**Sugar is addictive** and triggers dopamine in your brain - the same "feel good" chemical released by addictive drugs and gambling. Your brain learns to crave that hit and you end up wanting more and more sugar to get the same feeling. This is why cutting sugar feels hard at first.

**The good news:** You can retrain your brain in just 2-3 weeks for your taste buds and brain to adjust. After that, sugary foods will taste too sweet and the cravings will fade. Practical tips to dial it down:

- 1. Go gradual - not cold turkey.** Reduce sugar in tea/coffee by half teaspoon each week
- 2. Swap, don't stop** - replace sweet snack with berries and nuts, not nothing
- 3. Eat protein with every meal** - keeps blood sugar steady and reduces cravings
- 4. Distract yourself** when a craving hits with a favourite activity - walk, read, play a game etc. Wait 10 minutes and the cravings often pass
- 5. Break the routine** - if you always have biscuit with tea, change when you have tea
- 6. Get moving** - Star jumps, squats or a 5-minute walk releases dopamine naturally without sugar
- 7. Sleep matters** - poor sleep increases sugar cravings. Aim for 7-8 hours
- 8. Don't keep sugar or sweet treats at home** - you can't eat what isn't there
- 9. Plan for cravings** - keep healthy alternatives ready (Fruit, berries, Greek yoghurt, small piece dark chocolate, nuts and seeds)
- 10. What to expect:** Cravings may be strong at first with irritable feelings. After just 3 days this will become easier and after 3 weeks you will find a new normal and will not miss sugar like before.

**Every time you resist a craving, you're rewiring your brain. It gets easier. Stick with it!**

### HIDDEN SUGAR ALERT!

Use the Yuka app to check for 'hidden sugar' in bread, cereals, sauces, and most processed foods.



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# 6.

## MOVE YOUR BODY DAILY

**Movement can be as good as medicine when it comes to reversing diabetes** - and comes with a whole host of other health benefits. Physical activity is a double win and lowers blood sugar in two ways. It burns sugar as fuel which lowers levels right away. Regular exercise also builds muscle which stores excess sugar. More muscle = more storage capacity and lower blood sugar.

### What to do:

- Aim for 30 minutes of activity most days
- Walk for 10-15 minutes straight after meals - especially bigger meals - this brings blood sugar down within 30 minutes
- Any movement counts - gardening, housework, dancing, swimming
- Build it into your day - take stairs, walk to shops, park further away from work / home
- Lifting weights or resistance training builds muscle that stores more sugar
- Avoid being stationary for more than an hour

**TOP TIP: Use an app** - Moova, Wakeout, StandApp or Move can all help with reminders, alarms and simple movement routines.

### Simple swaps:

- Sitting after dinner >> walk the long way round to the sofa - around the block!
- Drive everywhere >> Walk for short trips, cycle for longer ones. Cheaper and no parking needed!
- Take the lift or escalator >> Climb the stairs
- TV in the evening >> Podcast while walking, running, gardening or housework

### Make it easy:

- Start small - even 5 minutes helps
- Finding an activity you enjoy means you are more likely to stick with it
- Find walking / exercise buddy for motivation
- Record your daily step count using a phone app - every step lowers blood glucose
- Try doing press-ups, squats or star jumps whilst waiting for the kettle to boil or shower to warm up - small regular habits amount to big health changes

## YOUR SUCCESS TIPS

**Start small:** Master one step before moving to the next. Even one change makes a difference!

**Make it visible:** Print this out and stick it on your fridge as a daily reminder.

**Tell someone:** Share your plan with family or a friend. Support helps!

**Slip-ups are normal:** Missed a day? No worries. Just start again tomorrow. It's about progress, not perfection.

**Be patient:** Blood glucose levels can take a few weeks to come down. Stick with it!

**Celebrate wins:** Managed all 6 steps for a week? That's fantastic - treat yourself (but maybe not to a high salt or sugary snack!)

**Remember: Your blood glucose levels respond to every positive change - even small steps, made daily, can have big impacts: Start today, keep going, and your future self will thank you.**

**“It's not all or nothing. It's all or something.”**

