

Controlling Blood Sugar In Type 2 Diabetes Without The Use Of Drugs

I was told in rapid succession that I was suffering from intermittent claudication (that's blocked arteries in the legs), high blood pressure, Diabetes Type 2. and that I was overweight.

Not a lot of pleasure there! The intermittent claudication made it increasingly difficult to do much, so that in effect I had become a prisoner to my house and garden. Exercise was out of the question, my legs simply couldn't cope, but it was hoped that angioplasty to each leg would cure the problem. It didn't.

My high blood pressure, I was assured, could be treated by a cocktail of drugs and by weight loss. The cocktail of four different drugs worked, but I could not seem to lose weight.

So I was given a choice: the blood sugar levels could be controlled either by drugs or by diet. Since I was already taking four different drugs for blood pressure, I thought it best to try diet control. I was also hopeful that this might help me to lose weight. But where am I to start? My diabetic nurse provided me with a blood sugar monitor and said I should aim to stay under 9 as my reading. My Doctor said to stay under 7. Now she has reduced this to under 5. My current long-term reading is 5.3. A big drop from the high readings I used to produce.

So what did I do? At first I was taking blood samples three times a day and was truly astonished at how my blood sugar jumped about. Plain porridge and water, which I absolutely loved, would produce a reading of 16 and yet, being a slow release multigrain, I had always assumed it would be good for my health. A single apple showed a reading of 12! Tea with milk but no sugar, 10. Obviously there was more to this than met the eye.

The first learning point was that the body needs water and lots of it. Out went sugared fizzy drinks and in came plain boiled water. The Swedes call it Silver Tea, I'm told, and it is very refreshing. Now a cup starts every day and two or three more follow. Low calorie tonic water is also useful (the quinine helps prevent cramps), mineral water (I especially like carbonated forms), low calorie Ginger Beer and cold filtered tap water.

The next, crucial, learning point: control your carbohydrate intake, in my case to under 40gms a day. Eliminate bread, cakes, sweets, pasta, rice, cereals, biscuits, sugars, fruit juice, potatoes, honey, jam, marmalade, baked beans. Reading the food labels is a real eye opener!

Instead, increase your intake of vegetables and low carbohydrate foods & fruits. All of the following are particularly good: Broccoli, cabbage, spinach, runner beans, brussels sprouts cauliflower, broccoli, peppers, tomatoes, courgettes, aubergines,

swede, squashes, celeriac, green salads. Fruit can be very high in sugars, so use in moderation. Choose rhubarb, grapefruit, raspberries, loganberries, strawberries, blueberries, all of which are O.K. Do not add sugar, of course, so sweeten with cinnamon instead. Avocados are low in carbohydrates, but high in fat, so eat no more than half a fruit a day. Add nuts and seeds to your diet, again in small amounts.

As far as alcohol is concerned, all beers are out. One or two glasses of red wine a day are acceptable.

Avoid processed foods as much as possible and certainly do NOT eat hydrogenated fats of any kind. They are to my mind a food industry con. and of no use to any one other than manufacturers of processed food.

Buy only genuine, non-reconstituted lean meat, poultry, game and fish. Reduce your saturated fat intake by cooking on a griddle and cutting off any excess fat. Cook with olive and nut oils, as these unsaturated fats are good for you. Never use lard. Add game to your repertoire of ingredients, along with plenty of oily and white fish such as salmon, haddock, tuna, swordfish, mackerel & kipper.

I have never once felt hungry with this change in my eating habits to simple whole foods. I still find I miss eating plain yoghurt, vanilla ice cream and various cheeses. But then I occasionally do give myself a small treat - provided I stay within my allowance.

The results are good for my health:

My good cholesterol is high

My bad cholesterol is low

My type II diabetes blood sugar is well controlled by diet alone

I have lost 10 lbs in weight.

My next task is to lose another 30 lbs. I know now that this is achievable. The more weight I lose, the more able I am to increase my activity levels - and the more incentive I have to control my calorie intake. At last I feel that I am taking back control of my body and discovering that you really are what you eat!