



The Skinny on Which Weight Loss Programs are Best for Your Diabetes

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Losing weight can help reverse your diabetes

If you have diabetes, there is much to be gained by maintaining a healthy body weight. Weight loss can make it easier for you to control your blood sugar and help reduce your need for insulin and other diabetes medications. Studies show that you may be able achieve this by losing just 5% of your total body weight. Even for those whose doctors prescribe a semaglutide like Ozempic, a healthy, low-calorie diet is essential to making the drug work as effectively as possible.

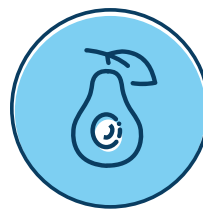
Low Carb Diets

Carbs are one of the **three main macronutrients** (the other two being protein and fat) which your body needs in large amounts in order to stoke energy levels and keep your systems going. But carbs also have a **huge impact** on your diabetes. Your body breaks carbohydrates down into glucose and you need to take insulin to counter that added sugar.

Since the main issue many people with diabetes face is an inability to properly manage their blood sugar, this means a low-carb diet makes **perfect sense**. (In fact, before the discovery of insulin in 1921, very low carb diets were standard treatment for people with diabetes.) But before undertaking the low-carb diets mentioned below, it's important to check with your health care provider.

Everyone has a different response to, and need for, carbs, and one person's low carb diet may be right for them but wrong for you. **Your doctor can help you determine how low you can go when it comes to carbs.** In addition, certain people should not follow severe low carb diets—

pregnant women, those with kidney disease or those with a history of eating disorders, for example—and your doctor can let you know if a low carb diet is right for your overall health.



Ketogenic

The popular ketogenic (or keto) diet is an **ultra-low carb** diet that involves severely cutting back on carbs and replacing them with fat, which puts

your body into a metabolic state called ketosis, wherein your body becomes super-efficient at burning fat. This generally means consuming only 20-50 grams of carbs per day (around two to three slices of white or whole wheat bread). Instead, you eat meat, fish, eggs, nuts and healthy oils.

The pros? In one study, people who stayed on a keto diet for six months (40 grams of carbs a day) lost 13 pounds more than a control group of eaters and had better A1C and fasting blood glucose levels after six months.

The cons? Many people find it hard to sustain this carefully managed and admittedly restrictive diet for long periods of time.



The Mediterranean Diet

Another popular low carb diet is the **Mediterranean diet**, so-called because it is named after the age-old eating habits of those who live in countries that

about the Mediterranean. That means **seafood, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes and olive oil**.

The Mediterranean diet is generally considered a healthier overall diet than keto, as it has less meat and cheese and more protein and fat from plant-based sources. It's also a little less stringent on carbs, allowing you to eat as much as 250 grams a day. **The pros?** This is an easier diet to stay on for long periods of time and can reduce the incidence of chronic inflammation, improve heart health and lower blood glucose levels. **The cons?** Weight loss is generally not as dramatic as it can be with the keto diet.

What about Intermittent Fasting?

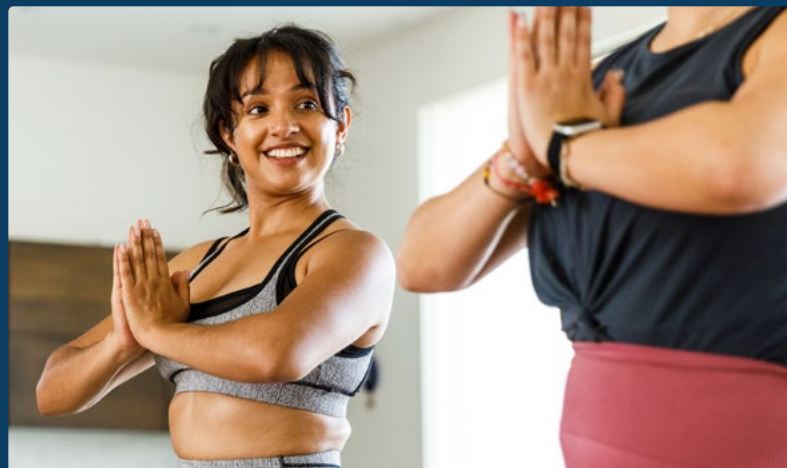
Intermittent fasting (also known as time-restricted eating) is a dieting technique in which people restrict the hours they can eat and fast for the rest of the day—for instance, fasting for 16 hours and eating only during an eight-hour window. This can help with weight loss because such fasting prolongs the period when your body burns the calories you consumed at your last meal, thus exhausting the sugar stores it has built up, and starting to burn fat.

A 2023 study by researchers at the University of Illinois Chicago found that intermittent fasting helps people with diabetes **lose weight and control their blood sugar**. The intermittent fasting participants ate only between noon and eight p.m. They were not restricted in their diet or told to reduce their calorie intake, but because of the eight-hour window for eating, ended up doing so anyway. The study found that intermittent fasting was **more effective**

for weight loss than calorie restriction – intermittent fasting participants **lost 3.6% of their body weight in six months**, while calorie restriction participants **lost 1.8%**. However, reductions in hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) levels were about the same for intermittent fasting and calorie restriction participants.

The authors of the study suggested that intermittent fasting might, at the very least, be an effective initial lifestyle intervention, rather than medication, for those **newly diagnosed** with type 2 diabetes or those who are prediabetic. And, according to the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism, there has been at least one study showing that such fasting can actually **help reverse type 2 diabetes**.

Once again, this is a diet to undertake only after **consulting with your health care provider**.



It's up to you!

These are only a few of the potential diets available to you, and, of course, any weight loss plan needs to be enhanced with a **solid exercise routine**. Whatever you choose, set goals that are realistic, enlist the aid of your doctor, your family and your friends and don't try to make too many changes too quickly. The goal, as in so much in life, **is progress, not perfection**.

Sources: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/intermittent-fasting-weight-loss-people-type-2-diabetes> | <https://today.uic.edu/intermittent-fasting-diabetes-weight-loss/> | <https://www.endocrine.org/news-and-advocacy/news-room/2022/intermittent-fasting-may-reverse-type-2-diabetes> | <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/low-carb-diet-for-diabetes#Can-very-low-carb-diets-help-manage-diabetes?> | <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2022/07/0/keto-mediterranean-diet-diabetes.html> | <https://www.heart.org/en/news/2022/11/17/some-reduced-carb-diets-may-decrease-diabetes-risk-but-others-may-raise-it> | <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/low-carb-diet-helps-cut-blood-sugar-levels-in-people-with-prediabetes-202301032889>
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