

# Creating Blood Sugar Balance

The holidays are here and are often accompanied by stress and foods high in sugar. Do you find yourself more irritable, craving sugar, missing meals, frequenting coffee cafes? Have you noticed that you are fatigued after meals, "have to" have something sweet after dinner, craving sweets and then binging on sweets? Perhaps you are experiencing dysglycemia or an imbalance in sugar metabolism.

There are two major patterns of dysglycemia, reactive hypoglycemia and insulin resistance. Reactive hypoglycemia often results when individuals are under stress, eat food high in sugar and miss meals. This can result in a rapid rise in blood sugar, the pancreas overreacts releasing an excess of insulin and a subsequent drop in blood sugar. Then the adrenals secrete stress



hormones to increase blood sugar back to normal. This pattern over an extended period of time can result in both pancreatic and adrenal exhaustion. The typical symptoms include irritability, light headedness, coffee dependence for energy, craving sweets, waking up and not being



increases in your blood sugar. Type II diabetes is diagnosed when your fasting blood sugar is 126mg/dL or higher on two separate occasions. This is different from Type I diabetes, which occurs because the individual has lost the ability to make insulin, due to damage to the beta cells of the pancreas. Type I diabetes is most often diagnosed in childhood.

A major contributing factor to type II diabetes is obesity. Insulin resistance plays a role in not being able to lose weight. When there is insulin resistance, the cells are impaired from being able to bring the glucose from the blood

there is high blood sugar insulin is released from the pancreas. When an individual experiences chronic hyperglycemia, i.e. insulin resistance and glucose cannot get into the cells, then glucose is oxidized into free radicals and the impact on the body is inflammation. This affects the nerves, blood vessels, kidneys and the retina. Consequently, insulin resistance affects blood pressure and contributes to increasing LDL (bad cholesterol) and decreasing HDL (good cholesterol).

What can you do to balance blood sugar? The cornerstone to balancing blood sugar is diet, exercise and stress reduction. A diet to balance blood sugar begins with a rainbow assortment of vegetables. It includes non-sweet fruits such as tomatoes, avocados, cucumbers, lemons or low glycemic fruits such as blueberries, raspberries, cherries, pomegranate and grapefruit. Fats and oils that are beneficial include flax, hemp, sesame, walnut, sunflower, almond, olive and coconut. Nuts and seeds provide excellent snacks and may include walnuts, almonds, brazil nuts, sesame seeds, pumpkin and sunflower seeds. Cold water fish such as salmon, halibut and mackerel are high in omega-3 fatty acids.

Grains that support blood sugar balance include quinoa, spelt, buckwheat, brown rice, oats and millet. Garlic and onions have been shown to decrease high blood sugar. Beans such as green beans, papago, mung, pinto and garbanzo beans are high fiber complex carbohydrates. Stevia is a sweetener with no calories, provides a sweet taste, does not raise blood sugar and contains vitamins and minerals.

able to fall back asleep, lack of hunger in the morning or feeling nauseous. Insulin resistance means that there is too much glucose (sugar) in the blood stream. Glucose cannot get into the cells and you may feel tired after meals, crave sweets, have increased appetite and thirst, frequent urination and experience difficulty losing weight.

Insulin is secreted by the pancreas and stimulates the uptake of glucose into the cells. The cells need glucose for energy. Alterations in insulin result in metabolic disorders such as hypoglycemia, insulin resistance, and diabetes. Type II diabetes occurs when an individual has elevated fasting blood sugar because the cells have become non-responsive or resistant to insulin. Prior to a diagnosis of type II diabetes, you will have

into the cells to be used for energy. The blood sugar is then forced into a different pathway, one in which the glucose will be converted to adipose instead of energy for the cells. Leptin is a hormone released from adipose tissue that is responsible for burning fat and stimulating thermogenesis. As the percentage of body fat increases, it appears that the leptin is not able to stimulate metabolic processes.

The body in its infinite wisdom attempts to find balance by triggering a hormonal response from the pancreas. When there is low blood sugar, the pancreas releases glucagons. When

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