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SMALL CHANGES BIG IMPACT

with Jude Healey



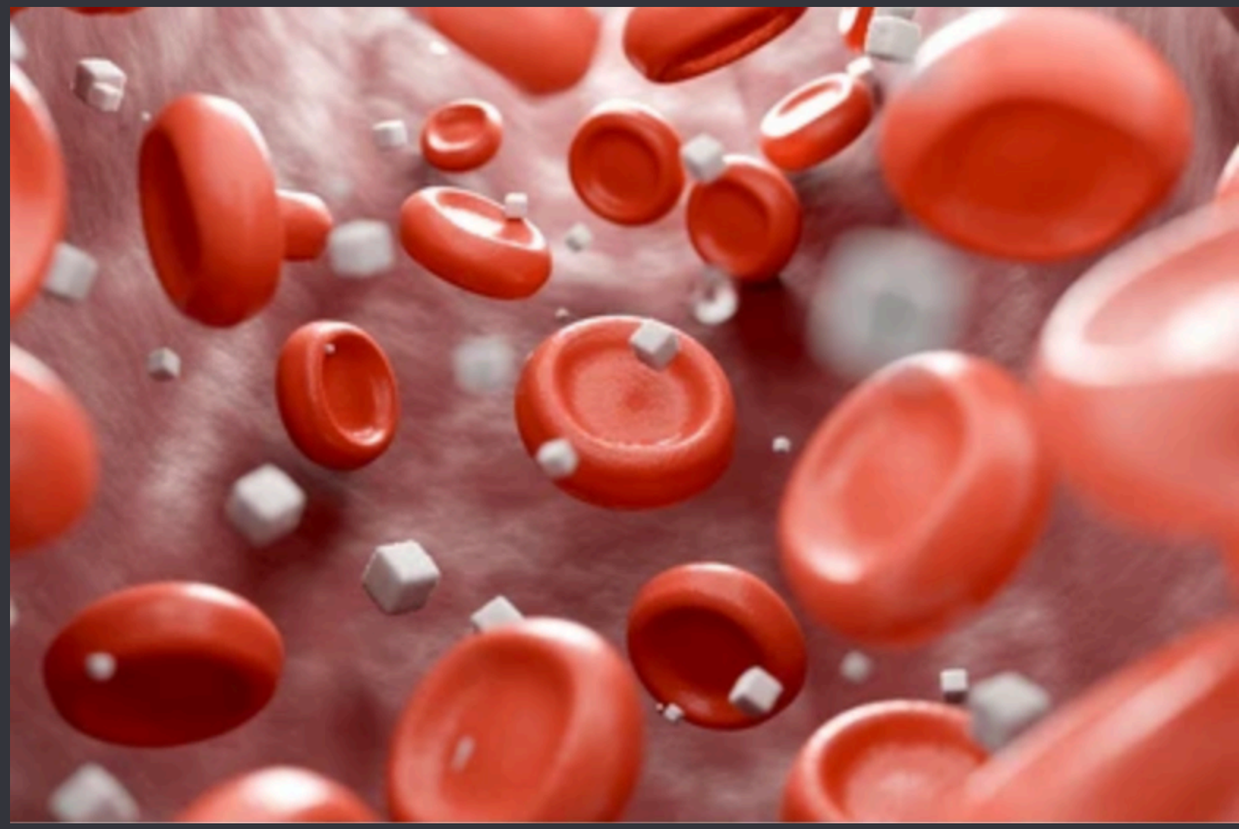
BLOOD SUGAR REGULATION

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- Blood sugar and insulin
- Dysregulation and its effects
- Risk factors

BREAK

- Dietary and lifestyle recommendations
- Small changes big impact



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BLOOD SUGAR

cellular energy

About

- Also called blood glucose
- Concentration of glucose in the blood.
- Comes from dietary carbohydrates & liver
- Levels rise and fall
- Dependent on when and what you eat, and activity.

Role

- Primary fuel for body’s cells
- Needs to stay within narrow range - too low = starves cells, too much = damages tissues.



ROLE

Role of glucose

1. Used for energy - Cells break glucose down for cellular energy

2. Short term energy reserve - Excess glucose stored as glycogen, in the liver and muscle cells

3. Converted to fat - When glycogen stores are full, remainder turn into fatty acids and stored as triglycerides, mainly in adipose (fat) tissue and the liver.

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INSULIN

About

- Hormone
- Made in pancreas
- Released into bloodstream in response to rising blood glucose levels

Role

- Acts like a key - binds to insulin receptors
- Unlocks cells so glucose can enter
- Result: blood glucose levels goes down.



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INSULIN RESISTANCE

What happens when blood sugar is high day after day?

Pancreas must keep releasing large amounts of insulin.

Over time:

- Cells overwhelmed and respond less
- Less glucose gets into cells = more remaining in the bloodstream (inflammation and tissue damage)
- More glucose in blood stream - triggers more insulin release
- Result - chronically high blood sugar levels AND high insulin - insulin resistance
- Progresses to prediabetes, then type 2 diabetes

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SYSTEMS AFFECTED BY BLOOD SUGAR DYSREGULATION

Oxidative stress, AGE's and inflammation

- **Skin** - tissue and organ aging and inflammation
- **Cardiovascular system** - negatively affects cholesterol - CVD
- **Metabolism** - weight gain, insulin is the fat storage hormone
- **Vision** - damages blood vessels in the eyes - diabetic retinopathy
- **Nervous system** - damages blood vessels, nerve damage
- **Bone metabolism** - leeches calcium from bones, reduces bone formation
- **Kidney function** - damages blood vessels and nephrons that filter blood
- **Brain function** - damages neurons and blood vessels to brain, impairs cognition and memory. Risk factor for dementia and Alzheimers disease

INFLUENCING FACTORS

- Poor diet - frequent consumption of refined carbohydrates and sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, excess caloric intake, and poor meal patterns
- Chronic stress - raises cortisol, which raises blood sugar
- Inadequate sleep - raises cortisol, which raises blood sugar
- Physical inactivity

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BREAK

After break

Diet

- glycemic index - foods to avoid and include
- benefits of protein, fiber, fat and antioxidants

Lifestyle changes

- sleep, hydration, movement

Small changes for big impact

- Tiny habits

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GLYCEMIC INDEX

High glycemic

- Processing and refining strip away fiber and break down starches, so the body digests and absorbs these foods quickly.
- Blood sugar spikes fast and crashes soon after.
- Examples: white bread, sugary cereals, white rice, soda, candy.

Low glycemic

- Less-refined foods retain their fiber, protein, and fat content, which slows digestion.
- Creates a gradual rise in blood sugar and steadier energy.
- Examples: lentils, oats, most vegetables, whole fruit, nuts, whole grains

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FOODS TO AVOID

- White rice and refined wheat products
- Most packaged cereals
- Refined flours, packaged baked goods, regular pasta
- Foods with added sugar
- Sodas and fruit juices
- Sweetened snack foods



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FOODS TO INCLUDE

- Whole grains
- Antioxidants
- Low-glycemic carbohydrates
- Fiber
- Prebiotic foods
- Healthy fats
- Non-starchy vegetables
- Low glycemic fruits
- Fermented foods



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Protein

Why protein matters to blood sugar levels:

- Necessary to build muscle mass and prevent muscle breakdown as we age
- Muscle increases how fast the body uses glucose (glucose sink)
- Slows digestion → regulates blood sugar, and satiety

How much:

app. 30g per meal (about a palm-size serving) • ~90g daily

Food sources:

Poultry, fish, meat, dairy, eggs, legumes, nuts, seeds



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Fiber





Why fiber matters to blood sugar levels:

- Slows glucose absorption

Most Americans eat less than recommended

How much:

25 - 30g/day for women
38g/day for men

Start slow!
Too much too fast causes gas & bloating. Increase gradually over weeks.

Food sources:

Berries, legumes, fruits, avocado, nuts, seeds, leafy greens

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Quality food sources:

Nuts, seeds, fatty fish, avocados, coconut and olive oil, ghee, butter

Avoid - trans fats and inflammatory seed oils

Healthy Fat



Why healthy fat matters to blood sugar levels:

- Fat slows how fast the stomach empties - slows glucose absorption
- Satiety - reduces cravings between meals
- lowers glucose spike

How much:

3-5 servings/day
(1 serving = 1 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp peanut butter, ½ avocado)

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EAT THE RAINBOW



Benefits:

Plant pigments (carotenoids & polyphenols) are anti-inflammatory and **antioxidant** powerhouses!

Help to counter the damage done by AGEs
Reduce inflammation, reduce oxidative stress, protect skin health

Plants on every plate - aim for 5 Colorful Servings Daily

Color guide:

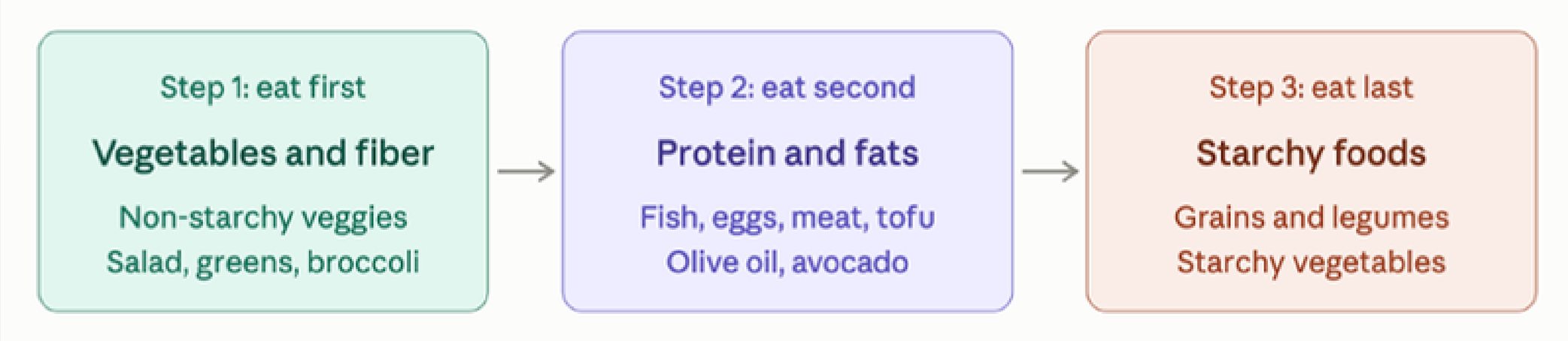
- Red/Purple: berries (anti-inflammatory)
- Green: leafy greens (magnesium, folate)
- Orange/Yellow: peppers, carrots (vitamins A & C)
- Herbs & Spices: turmeric, ginger, rosemary, garlic, cinnamon (antioxidants)

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ORDER

Eat fiber, protein and fat before carbohydrates

- Slows stomach emptying
- Result - smaller and slower rise in blood glucose



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STRESS

Chronic stress

- Keeps cortisol elevated - raising blood glucose levels

Helpful techniques

- Exercise - Increases endorphins and neurotransmitters
- Yoga and mindful breath work
- Purpose - volunteer in your community, work in the garden, pick up a new hobby
- Gratitude journaling



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Nutrition

SLEEP

Why sleep matters?

- Poor sleep - stress response (cortisol and blood sugar)
- Regenerative and antioxidant (melatonin)
- Regulates blood sugar & weight

Sleep hygiene

- kitchen closes after dinner
- limit evening screens
- aim for 7-9 hours
- cool, dark room



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Hydration



Water is the healthiest drink

About 60% of your body is made of water. Your body has NO water stores. ESSENTIAL. consume daily

Dehydration:

- Stress response → cortisol & blood sugar spike

How much:

- Women: 2-3L / 8-12 8oz cups per day
- Men: 3.7L per day

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Movement



Benefits:

- Muscles burn glucose for energy, taken directly from blood (without needing insulin)
- Increases insulin sensitivity
- Improves sleep & blood glucose levels

Walking:

- 10-15 minutes after meals - soaks glucose from meal, lowering spike

Practice caution if experiencing:

- Feeling of overwhelm, high fatigue, chronic insomnia

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TINY HABITS

Consistency is the key to lasting change!

Behavior change

What do you **want** to change?

1. **Tiniest** version of that behavior tagged after an existing habit (trigger)

After I_____, (existing habit)
I will _____. (new behavior)

*** Environment - make the good behaviors easy to do and unwanted hard to do.

2. **Celebrate** victory immediately - happy dance!

3. Easier over time and you can increase.

BJ Fogg from Stanford University, at TEDxFremont - Changing behaviors and building lasting behaviors.

LOOKING FORWARD

How can you support your blood sugar over the holiday season?

LETS WORK TOGETHER!

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