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October 30, 2015

Curb Carbs To Help Prevent Post-Meal Highs For Diabetics

When you have diabetes, you know how important it is to keep track of what you are eating. Research suggests that post-meal highs may be more harmful than once thought. Even if your blood glucose is steady the rest of the time, high levels after eating might mean your disease isn't under control. This could lead to complications, including eye, kidney and heart disease.

What affects the size of your post-meal highs? The amount of carbohydrates you eat is one important factor. Post-meal highs tend to be larger at breakfast than other meals. The amount of protein and fats in your diet, how resistant your body is to insulin and a food's glycemic index (GI) also may play a role in post-meal highs.

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), counting the total grams of carbohydrates you eat or using food exchanges is still the best way to control blood sugar after a meal. However, the ADA also says that using the GI in addition to these methods can further protect against high blood sugar.

To keep control of your blood glucose level after eating, follow these steps:

- Test your blood glucose within an hour or two of your biggest meal of the day. Experts recommend levels between lower than 140 mg/dl to lower than 180 mg/dl.
- Ask your diabetes team if using the GI could help with your diabetes meal planning. If so, when you eat carbohydrates, chose those with a low GI.
- Take a walk after your meal. One study in the *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association* found that taking a walk after mealtime may have a more beneficial effect on blood glucose than exercising before a meal.

Try these smart food choices to help control blood sugar:

- Whole grains digest slowly. So choose foods such as multigrain bread and brown rice, barley and rye, instead of white bread and white rice.
- Cut back on starchy vegetables, such as potatoes and other root vegetables. Load up on non-starchy varieties, such as asparagus, broccoli, spinach and cauliflower.
- Add a side of beans to your meals.
- Avoid candy and soft drinks, which have a high GI and zero nutrients.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; Journal of the American Medical Directors Association