

How You Can Avoid Diabetes Epidemic

(NAPSA)—A diabetes epidemic has hit the United States. How can you avoid becoming one of the 800,000 new cases of diabetes each year? Read on.

At any given moment, it is estimated that 80 million Americans are at risk for developing the potentially debilitating and life-threatening disease. Although type 2 diabetes is becoming more common, it is a fairly preventable disease.

"My father has diabetes, and I've seen the health problems it's caused him," said Emily Lobdell, 26, of Chicago who is at high risk for type 2 diabetes. "I definitely do not want that to happen to me."

Lobdell eats whole grains, exercises and makes good diet choices because she knows that poor health habits are partially to blame for the upward trend of type 2 diabetes, which is also referred to as "adult onset" diabetes. Research is clear that an inactive lifestyle and poor food choices top the list of reasons for the epidemic. Fear not, however, there is a silver lining. Making lifestyle changes may reduce your chances for developing the disease.

The science is in: choose your foods carefully. Studies that look at the eating patterns found that those who ate vegetables, fruit, fish, poultry and whole grains had a lower risk of type 2 diabetes.

Though fruits and vegetables are a necessary part of a healthy diet, several studies indicate that whole-grain foods are very effective in lowering the risk for type 2 diabetes.

Research recently published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* shows that whole grains from breads and breakfast cereals are a surprising new weapon to prevent the disease.

Researchers from Harvard and the University of Minnesota conducted the first ever double-blind clinical study designed to improve the body's "insulin response" by eating U.S. guideline levels of

whole-grain foods. The term "insulin response" refers to the way the body processes blood sugar. Whole-grain foods like a bowl of cereal tend to improve the body's ability to handle blood sugar. The U.S. guideline level is three servings of whole-grain foods a day; however, nine in 10 Americans DO NOT meet that minimum guideline.

Vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients—whole grains contain plenty of these substances and together, they are part of the diabetes-prevention picture. Vitamin E, magnesium and phytoestrogens are just a few of the many components in whole grains that may also help improve insulin sensitivity.

A Great Start Toward Total Nutrition—Read the label. It's easy to meet the guideline and give whole-grain foods a spot at every meal. Choose a whole-grain cereal for breakfast, such as Total, Cheerios, Wheat Chex or a shredded wheat cereal. Oatmeal is whole grain, too. Select whole-grain bread for sandwiches and use whole-grain pastas, brown rice or other whole-grain dishes at supper. One bowl of whole-grain cereal along with a sandwich with two slices of whole-grain bread and you've met the requirement for three servings.

Finding Whole-Grain Foods

Breakfast cereals*
Bread, bagels, crackers, pasta*
Barley
Bulgur
Brown rice
Corn, fresh or frozen
Quinoa

* Check ingredient labels—look for the word "whole" before the name of the grain in the ingredient list. It should be the first ingredient.

OTHER TIPS

Look for the "whole grain" seal on products.
Look for the whole-grain health claim on packages.

