

HOW TO BALANCE YOUR BLOOD SUGAR

All Day



By Bridgit Danner, LAc, FDNP
with Women's Wellness Collaborative



A very common complaint amongst women is sugar cravings. They feel they are held hostage by them! Perhaps less griped about, but just as present, are drastic swings of energy from ecstatic to lethargic.

We really aren't just good-looking victims of sugar, we have the power to change it. But unfortunately most women don't have the information to change it.

This short e-book will give you the information to start to bring your sugar cravings under control, and get the sustained energy you want through the day.

Remember to implement, and to be patient. Habits are hard to break at first, but if you stick with, I promise you will see and feel the positive changes.

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We care about keeping your healthy through education, implementation and community!

Health and Hugs,

Bridgit Danner, FDNP, LAc

Founder of [Women's Wellness Collaborative](#)



Creating a Healthy Daily Routine

Morning

- Upon waking up, immediately drink at least 8 ounces of water. Either room temperature or warm water, and add a half lemon if you wish
- Eat breakfast within ninety minutes of waking
- Don't consume caffeine of any kind before eating breakfast
- Eat a protein-rich food with breakfast, such as eggs, a vegan protein shake, or smoked salmon
- Minimize carbohydrates in the morning. Your cortisol is naturally high now, and thus your blood sugar is too. If you raise your blood sugar further without being able to burn off the sugar, you risk weight gain or fatty liver. You also risk a big crash of energy in an hour or two. Avoid juices, breads and starches.

Mid-Morning

Have clean water throughout the day. If you are still hungry, you can make a chicory tea with coconut cream to fill you up, or have another healthy snack.

Lunch

- Eat lunch within three and a half hours of breakfast
- Consume the majority of your daily calories at lunch if possible
- Try to consume only 0- 1 carbohydrate at lunch
- Consider having a salad or a pile of steamed greens at this meal, along with protein and fat
- Incorporate at least one good-fat food, such as avocado, olive oil or sunflower seeds. They keep blood sugar more stable and prevent you from craving simple carbs later.
- Take a broad-spectrum digestive enzyme (a form of nutritional supplement) so you absorb as much nutrients as possible from your meal. If you notice a significant improvement in how you feel when you take a digestive enzyme, feel free to take it with every meal, or with any large meal.
- Consider taking a short, brisk walk after lunch. It helps your cells uptake the sugars from your meal. Also, I love to take yoga at mid-day before lunch. It gets me moving, and keeps my energy level up all afternoon.

Afternoon

- Continue to drink clean water between meals. Afternoon dehydration can make you go for the sweet treats.
- A half or whole lemon in a tall glass of water can be a great pick-me-up
- Using adaptogens herbs like maca in the afternoon can also give you a boost
- Eat a snack within a few hours of lunch
- Choose a nutrient-dense snack that will keep you satisfied until dinner. Some suggestions are: rice crackers with avocado, hummus and a slice of turkey breast, apple with natural peanut butter, blueberries and almonds

Dinner

- Eat a dinner within two and a half to three and a half hours of your snack
- Create a meal that consists of vegetarian or animal protein and raw or cooked vegetables
- Have a fermented food with your dinner such as a side of sauerkraut
- Have one starchy carb or whole grain as desired like yam fries, quinoa salad or brown rice. Carbohydrates in the evening will help you sleep. But avoid processed starches and alcohol!

After Dinner

- Drink water, but not too close to bedtime.
- Evening is a nice time to have a hot cup of bone broth to help you relax.
- Have a bedtime snack if you are hungry, or if you tend to wake up hungry or anxious in the middle of the night or early morning.
- Consider taking a magnesium or multi-mineral supplement sometime before bed. The magnesium is calming and helps overall with sugar cravings.

Caring for Your Gut

You may think that sugar cravings couldn't have much to do with gut health, but in fact the opposite is true. We will explore a few ways to nourish the gut in order to balance your blood sugar and weight.

Gherlin and Leptin

Leptin increases metabolism and reduces appetite, and thereby can induce weight loss. Ghrelin increases hunger or “meal initiation.” It is also involved with the sense of thirst. It also increases cortisol, and high levels of blood sugar can induce it.

Whereas we need both these hormones for balance, we don’t want the ghrelin to run wild.
Tips:

- Stay hydrated; If you are getting hungry between meals, drink a glass of water before deciding to eat
- Sleep; a lack of sleep will make you crave sugar and carbs the next day
- Avoid dieting/ starving yourself of meals; this will increase ghrelin
- However, you can *slightly* lower your overall calories if you are gaining weight
- Eat more fibrous foods and root vegetables; they increase satiety longer after meals
- Exercise; just 1/2 hour a day increases beneficial leptin

Bacteroidetes and Firmicutes

The levels of these two bacteria in our gut are a good indicator if we are thin or not. Basically we want a lower level of firmicutes than bacteroidetes. If you do have a higher level of firmicutes, this may trigger your brain to crave sweets (the food it needs.) Here are some ways to change your levels:

- Avoid using antibiotics in hand washes, factory-raised meats and pharmaceuticals
- Manage stress, as it weakens your gut immunity
- Avoid sugar and processed grains that feed the firmicutes
- Eat beans and veggies, that feed the bacteroidetes
- Sleep according to a typical rhythm, getting to bed by 10 PM

Reducing Stress and Stress Eating

Stress and Cortisol

When we raise our cortisol level in response to stress, our blood sugar comes up too. This gives us energy to take on the ‘danger’ the brain is perceiving, but when the blood sugar drops, you might be hungry for a quick fix.

Also, chronic high stress and cortisol can lead to belly fat, as the sugar we cannot use (since we’re probably not in real danger), will be stored.

Chronic stress also thins the gut lining, leaving us susceptible to malabsorption of the nutrients we need to regulate our hormones.

It's important to manage stress daily by doing short (or long) meditations, taking short walks (especially helpful after meals), or taking time for a cup of tea or a visit with a friend.

Women have a harder time getting out of 'fight or flight' response than men. So we have to be really intentional about it!

Stress Eating

It's easy to eat when stressed, and, in those moments, we tend to make poor food choices. Here are a couple tips:

1. If you are feeling emotional and headed for the fridge, pause. Ask yourself what you are really feeling or needing. Ask yourself if you are really hungry, or are you actually thirsty or angry or sad? If you are truly hungry, take some deep breaths and get centered. Then prepare yourself something healthy with fats and protein to satisfy you.
2. We tend to eat in transitional moments. I'm not talking about the transition of a major life change, just the transition of going to a new place or activity. These minor transitions are still a stressor on our psyche.

We unconsciously grab a cookie in the break room as we enter work. We grab a granola bar for the car on the way to a class. Eating this way is not conscious, and chances are we will make poor food choices and not chew or digest well. If you are transitional eating, carve out the time to sit and eat properly as needed. If you are just feeling anxious, perhaps sitting, breathing, hugging, talking or drinking water would be a better way to get through a transitional time.

Supplements to Consider

Magnesium

Magnesium is an important mineral for blood sugar regulation, and many people are deficient in it. There is a correlation between low magnesium and insulin resistance. In

insulin resistance, the body's cells are blocking the uptake of sugars, so we may feel tired/hungry/ crave sweets, even though there is enough sugar in our system.

To get your magnesium, be sure your digestive system is working correctly, and get:

- Dark, leafy greens
- Fresh ground flax seed
- Almond butter
- Pumpkin seed
- Green juices
- Cocoa
- Spinach
- Quinoa
- Sesame seeds
- Black beans
- Cashews
- Sunflower seeds

You can also take a high-quality magnesium supplement at 400 mg/ day.

Berberine

Berberine is a yellow plant compound found in several plants, including Oregon grape, tree turmeric and goldenseal.

It has a natural anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory effect, and benefits our blood sugar as well. In fact, it was tested to be as effective as the drug Metformin in controlling blood sugar! (Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18442638>) It also helps prevent mid-section weight.

It seems to do this in two ways. One is that it activates an enzyme called adenosine monophosphate-activated protein kinase, or AMPK, that revs up your metabolism. In a related effect, it alters the microbiome, in favor of bacteria that produce beneficial short-chain fatty acids. This may contribute to the alleviation of inflammation, insulin resistance and obesity by reducing the release of intestinal endotoxins into the blood.

Ask your doctor about taking 500 mg three times a day before meals. I would take a break from time to time on its use, however, as it is a potent anti-microbial.

Gymnema

Gymnema sylvestre, usually called gymnema, is a herb native to India and Sri Lanka. It's nickname is 'miracle fruit,' although it's actually the leaf that gets used medicinally. The constituent saponins have the effect of suppressing the taste of sweetness. It is traditionally used in India to treat diabetes.

The leaves of the Gymnema sylvestre plant contain gymnemic acids, which have been shown to slow the transport of glucose from the intestines to the bloodstream. This helps to lower blood sugar. Some research also suggests that gymnema extract can help repair and regenerate the beta cells in the pancreas that produce insulin.

This herb is really powerful, especially in the tincture form and rinsed around the mouth, and I'm surprised it's not used more considering high incidence of blood sugar issues in the modern world. Try a dropperful three times day, or when you have a craving.

So now that you learned about blood sugar, what are you going to do about it?!

Identify three things you will do in the week ahead:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.