Start Your Day With a Balanced Meal

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3 Diabetes Breakfast Mistakes to Avoid

Keeping your blood sugar in check is important when you have diabetes, and what you eat plays a big part in managing and treating your symptoms.

What do breakfast items like bagels, toast with jam, microwaveable oatmeal, granola, donuts, croissants, scones, muffins, and cereal all have in common?

Other than the fact that they're conveniently sized and packaged and taste *scrum diddly umptious* when warm, they are the makings of an all-out carb fest where *your* name, my friend, is on the VIP invitation list. With all that going on who can blame you for making them your go-to breakfast option?

In today's fast-paced world, many of us eat these sorts of foods as a quick energy source in addition to our coffee as we dash out the door Monday through Friday, leaving breakfasts like bacon and eggs to the weekend when we have "more time to cook".

The issue with this type of fuel, however, is that it's also all *refined* carbohydrates; this is what makes these options diabetes breakfast mistakes.

Simply put, eating refined carbs gives us a hard and fast blood sugar high which lends itself to a burst of energy and a mood boost. This lets us feel great until about two and a half hours later when we start to crash — leading to the mid-morning snack attack.

Why is this bad? This non-blood sugar stabilizing style of eating sets up our day for energy highs and lows, sugar cravings and mood swings. The most sure-fire way to stay off the blood sugar roller coaster is by avoiding the three most common breakfast mistakes.

Mistake 1: Eating Predominantly Carb-Based Breakfast

Do you know how your blood sugar reacts when you eat protein, fats, and carbohydrates independently?

When we eat one of these three macro-nutrients our blood sugar level rises as nutrients enter the bloodstream. Insulin is then needed to unlock the cells and allow the blood sugar to enter them and be used as fuel by our bodies. The higher our blood sugar levels, the more insulin is needed to bring it back down to normal.

Because of their chemical makeup and how quickly and easily the body processes them for use, carbs spike our blood sugar the most. Fat, on the other hand, takes a lot of energy to break down and use, so it spikes our blood sugar the least. Protein falls in between the two.

Now knowing that, can you see how eating a breakfast that's predominately carbs is a bad idea? Now, all carbs

aren't created equally, and even though you should opt to limit carbs in your breakfast, unrefined carbs are still much better than refined carbs.

Instead, adopt an eating style that’s designed to provide you long-lasting energy from protein (eggs, quality meat, and fish), healthy fats (olive oil, coconut oil, avocados, grass-fed butter, and fatty fish), vegetables and fruit.

Mistake 2: Avoiding Healthy Fats

Contrary to what food marketers would have you believe — fat is good for you! As I just explained, fat gives stable long-lasting energy and satiety without spiking your blood sugar.
But let’s be clear about one thing; *not all fats are created equal.*

Industrial seed oils such as vegetable oil, canola oil, corn oil, and soybean oil that are often passed off as healthy fats, aren't necessarily healthy. These oil fats are often hydrogenated, and this can cause oxidative stress to our bodies. Oxidation in the body leads to a whole host of health issues like inflammation, heart disease, stroke, obesity, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, and some forms of cancer.

To avoid this pitfall I advise you to do two things.

The first is to the read ingredient label on everything and steer clear of any "hydrogenated" seed oils that the list above mentioned.

Second, do not buy foods that are marketed as "fat-free". When food manufacturers remove fat from a food they generally replace it with sugar and low-quality carbohydrates to make it palpable. Instead always go for the full-fat options.

Remember, if you aren’t filling your plate with fats you’ll usually end up filling it with carbs, so avoiding healthy fat is not a good idea.

Mistake 3: Drinking Smoothies in Place of Food

A major health craze that’s being pushed right now is juicing and smoothies. I’m sure if you’ve spent any time looking at healthy eating articles on the internet you’ve noticed the popularity surge in green smoothies.

From the outset liquefying your fruits and vegetables for a meal doesn’t appear to be a bad thing. And to a degree, it isn’t. But for a diabetic who is trying to control their blood sugar, it’s a real problem for one major reason.

When you take away the flesh of a piece of fruit or a vegetable, whether it be extracting the juice independently or pulverizing it into a liquid, you are also removing the fiber.

Fiber acts as a blood glucose buffer. When you eliminate fiber you set yourself up for a blood sugar spike.

This is most apparent when making smoothies from fruit because fruits are predominantly sugar based; this is what qualifies eating only a smoothie for breakfast in our list of diabetes breakfast mistakes.

What also isn’t taken into account is how certain fruits and vegetables "act" when juiced — for instance, beets and carrots. Both are vegetables, but when put into a smoothie they both act as a fruit without the fiber flesh and spike to your blood sugar.

My advice would be to eat solid food at mealtime and save your smoothie for when you’re experiencing a blood sugar low or are looking for a healthy sweet treat.

Should I Force Myself to Eat Breakfast If I'm Not a Breakfast Eater?

Understand that there’s nothing wrong with not being a breakfast eater. It’s called intermittent fasting and it can have great health benefits if done properly. The one thing you should never do though is forced yourself to eat.

If you wake up in the morning and the thought of eating makes you queasy, prepare your food and carry on about your morning until you’re ready to eat. By prepping your breakfast ahead it’ll be right there when hunger does strike.

So, to briefly recap our diabetes breakfast mistakes — shy away from carb loading your breakfast, fill up on healthy fats, and save drinking smoothies for when you need a pick-me-up during the day.