

Dump Sugar, Eat Fat and Cure Diabetes?

More than 26 million Americans suffer from diabetes. That's 10 times the number from just 50 years ago.

But even with diets filled with sugar and soaring obesity rates, there is hope. Some people are reversing their Type II diabetes, getting off their medications, and feeling great.

This report focuses on Type II diabetes, which represents 90 to 95 percent of all diabetes cases.

Like millions of Americans, Janet Huffstetler felt diabetes was ruining her life. Then she changed her diet.

"I will tell you I have never felt so good," she said. "I think having my body free of sugar and carbs and processed chemicals has made such a difference in how I approach everything. I am just an entirely different person."

It's a far cry from the fear she felt eight years ago when doctors first diagnosed her with diabetes. She had seen what the disease did to her uncle.

"He ended up on full dialysis and blind," she recalled. "He also had coronary bypass surgery. They had started talking about amputation, but he died."

Diabetes is when you have too much sugar in your bloodstream. The standard treatment is largely medication.

More Meds, More Problems

Huffstetler's first doctor put her on medication that led to weight gain and depression.

"[It] kind of made me feel sluggish, it made me dizzy, it made

me lethargic," she recalled. "It was very hard to get motivated to do anything I should have been doing, more exercise and everything."

Daily life became a series of finger sticks, constantly monitoring her blood sugar levels.

"I was doing it four times a day, and they would tell you 'You have to do it on this side, so you can do it on that side the next time.' And your fingers became very sore," she said. "And I work at a computer and it's not fun."

Believing there had to be a better way, she changed doctors.

"I came home and Googled and Dr. Westman's name kept coming up. And I was fortunate enough to get in to see him within a month, which, I must have called and gotten an immediate cancellation," she said.

Diet-Only Approach

That appointment sent her to the nationally recognized Duke Lifestyle Medicine Clinic led by Dr. Eric Westman. He helped reverse Huffstetler's diabetes through his diet-only approach.

"Diabetes and obesity is complicated," Westman explained. "There are lots of factors that are involved, but most experts agree that it's the foods and the beverages that people eat that are the major cause for diabetes and obesity in the U.S., and so that should be the major focus of treatment."

Instead of treating the sugar in his patients' blood with medicine, Westman instructs them to eliminate their sugar intake.

Westman said he gets diabetes patients who are unhappy with the treatment they've received thus far.

"I took someone off 180 units of insulin for their diabetes in two days. And this is not unusual," he told CBN News. "This

individual was on diabetes medicine, injectable insulin, for 10 years. And just by changing the foods that person no longer needs insulin in two days.”

“And that’s because the insulin was treating the sugar in the foods that the person was eating,” he continued. “In that case the individual was drinking two liters of sugar-sweetened beverage every day and taking insulin to treat the sugar-sweetened beverage.

“Now this could be sweet tea in the South, orange juice in the North, any beverage that has sugar in it, this was raising the blood sugar,” Westman explained.

“And the doctor, the clinical doctors, put him on insulin without addressing the food component, the cause from the foods,” he said. “I instructed him to take away all the sugars, the starches in the foods and in the drinks. He never needed insulin again. It’s pretty amazing.”

Westman said his program is tremendously successful for the patients who do it.

A Success Story

Susan Hollowell did it and went from spending \$400 a month on diabetes drugs down to zero.

“I was insulin-dependent, five injections a day,” she recalled. “The third day of my diet my blood sugar dropped to 150 and I asked Dr. Westman, ‘What should I do about my insulin?’ I didn’t want to go over. And he said, ‘Get off of it.’”

Three months later she was 20 pounds lighter and had more energy than before.

“I wasn’t involved in any clubs or organizations, didn’t want to go to church very often, and now that’s not the case,” she said.

Managing Sugar Withdrawals

Westman admitted it's not easy for some people to give up sugar.

"There's a feed-forward, a drive that comes from eating sugar, that eating sugar makes you want to eat more sugar," he explained.

So his patients use artificial sweeteners to manage their withdrawal symptoms. Huffstetler remembers how she did it.

"When I first started, the little individual sugar-free Jello things, I would come and put whip cream on it; it would take care of the sweet," Huffstetler recalled.

"Now I was so amazed with this program," she said. "After a while you don't crave those things any more. You don't want it. When I have family dinners I have to really work on thinking about dessert for Thanksgiving or whatever because my mind just doesn't go there anymore."

In addition to sugar, Westman's diabetes diet also limits starches, like bread, pasta, and rice, because they also raise your blood sugar.

Butter and Oil, It's All Good!

Surprisingly, the diet allows patients to eat fats: the unsaturated kind like olive oil and avocados, and saturated fat like coconut oil and butter.

Although this diet might sound revolutionary, it's actually a throwback. If you notice, old medical textbooks dating back to the years before insulin was discovered, advised physicians to put their diabetic patients on a low carbohydrate, high fat diet."

Westman tells his patients not to worry about eating saturated fat because he says the latest science reveals it does not

cause heart disease.

“So now we’re in a phase of education, trying to get the word out about the cholesterol in the blood and the arteries and all that, do not get adversely affected by a high fat diet,” he said.

So to avoid diabetes, or reverse it, put the brakes on sugar and starch. It’s not always easy but well worth the effort.

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