

How I Reversed a Blood Sugar of 578 – Without Losing Weight

I can still vividly recall the day I became a Type 2 diabetic. Surprised and confused, I wanted my new health condition to disappear with the same abruptness with which it came, so that I could continue to eat whatever, and whenever, I chose. From my perspective, there was a valid reason for my disbelief. Although I was in my fifties at the time, I weighed only 148 pounds, which was less than my weight in college (yes, there are slender Type 2 Diabetics). My diet was also significantly healthier than the vast majority of Americans. In addition, although I was not as physically active as I was in college, I certainly was not a “couch potato.” My blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides were also normal.

Yet, there I found myself in the emergency room on July 5th, waiting for an insulin injection to lower my sugar, which had soared to 578 just a few hours earlier.

Diabetes runs in my family – foremost on my mother’s side. It was customary for my mother to take my sugar reading a few times a year. We were hoping to prevent any diabetes before I required medicine. The previous reading was during the Christmas holidays, and I recall that my sugar was 115. My health was reasonably good that winter and spring, so there was no illness that triggered my sudden onset. Prior to July 5th, however, I noticed that my vision was quickly deteriorating, and my thirst was literally unquenchable. Those were indicators. Less than seven months after my 115 reading, my sugar appeared to be out of control.

The next day, my mother and I discussed how to combat my diabetes. She explained how carbohydrates affect blood sugar. After careful consideration, I began to reason that if I altered my diet, I might just reverse my diabetes.

Two days later, I saw my doctor. He ordered blood work, and prescribed metformin to control my blood sugar, in addition to two other medications. Rather than accept conventional treatment, I confidently announced that I fully intended to beat my diabetes, and would not require medication. My incredulous doctor gazed at me. He acknowledged that there were cases when people did successfully reverse their diabetes. Generally, they were considerably overweight, had a horrible diet, or were extremely inactive. In my case, however, none of that was true. Still, I declined the medications and asked him to give me thirty days to reverse it. In disbelief, my doctor allowed it, but

warned me that I was setting myself up for failure. Nevertheless, I was determined to succeed.

I have no medical background, but I set out to learn as much about diabetes as possible. I discovered that even healthy carbs like whole grains and natural sugars in fruit will raise blood sugar. Each time I went grocery shopping, I spent an inordinate amount of time scrutinizing product labels. My plan was to lower the amount of carbohydrates consumed in every meal. I purchased more vegetables, lean meats, eggs, nuts, and low-carb snacks like sugar-free gelatin and high-protein bars.

I also exercised more. What started out as brisk walks soon transformed into jogging the hills near my apartment. With each determined stride, I was confident that I was reducing my blood sugar and healing myself. Afterwards, I limped home, rubbed pain-relieving cream all over my aching body, and rested on my heating pad. Like I said, I am in my fifties now.

A week later, I received the results of my first A1C reading. It was 11.7, which indicated an average blood sugar of 289 for the preceding three months. On August 6th, just one month later, I reduced my A1C to 9.7. By November, it plummeted to 6.0, which is normal. I have had a few more readings since then. None were greater than 6.5. In addition, my blood pressure, triglycerides, LDL-cholesterol (the bad cholesterol), HDL-cholesterol (the good cholesterol), and total cholesterol numbers all improved. Even though they were all initially in the normal range, I was still amazed by their improvement.

My doctor confessed that he was “impressed” by my test results. Previously, he believed it was impossible to reverse those numbers without losing weight. He recommended that I continue my dietary and exercise approach. I departed his office beaming with confidence, and was convinced that I just discovered the secret to reversing diabetes.

However, I did not anticipate what was about to happen. The holidays were approaching.

Over Thanksgiving, I learned very quickly that although I succeeded in reversing my blood sugar back to normal, I did not actually cure my diabetes. Even today, it takes very little to elevate my sugar. A piece of cake, some good pasta, sweet watermelon, and even my favorite sinful indulgence – mom’s homemade chocolate chip cookies – will all lift my blood sugar over 200 very quickly. Since then, I have actually recorded a blood sugar over 300 on a few occasions. Still, by monitoring my diet, and engaging in moderate exercise, I can maintain my average sugar in the normal range. Although I did not actually cure my diabetes, my new lifestyle reversed my high blood sugar. If I can

successfully continue that lifestyle, it is a distinction without a difference.

I put into practice several methods to maintain a low blood sugar. I often allow myself one day a week to eat what I want – and satisfy my cravings – while being more cautious during the other six days. I park my car as far as possible from the entrance of any place I go, forcing myself to walk more. Since I am not taking medication, I sometimes skip lunch while I am on the road traveling. I have learned that my overworked pancreas needs to rest on occasion, and fasting is actually beneficial to my health. If I am going to eat a high-carb meal, I discovered that my overall blood sugar responds better when I eat it in the morning. I never waste any carbs either. If I do not fully enjoy a food, I will not eat it just to achieve a sugar high. Quantity also matters. Even a low-carb meal can raise my sugar if I overeat. Avoiding after-dinner snacks is a plus. Moreover, while exercise is certainly important, I believe that ninety percent of my success is the result of my diet. Food is the body's source of energy. It is no different from putting bad gasoline into an automobile. If the fuel is inadequate, the condition of the rest of the car matters very little.

My genetic predisposition is the only explanation for my diabetes. Considering the side effects of most medications, I prefer to continue controlling my sugar through diet and exercise. At times, my self-control is challenged, and I still fight back tears as I pass by baked goods in the grocery store. But ultimately, the standard American diet is detrimental to the body. Eventually, I might need medication to combat my weakened pancreas. Until then, I am delighted that I have fought my disease through natural means. After all, nothing is more critical than my health – not even mom's chocolate chip cookies.

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