



# — Food for Health —

## Wellness Newsletter

By Melanie Jatsek RD, LD  
Heinein's Registered Dietitian

### Eating for Healthy Blood Sugar

#### MORE INSIDE:

Simple Tips for Sticking to Healthy Habits  
How to Eat for Balanced Blood Sugar  
Recipe: Kale & White Bean Skillet



Old habits don't just crumble when you decide to eat kale. They are very strong and must slowly be dismantled if you ever hope to be free of them.

— Mel Jatsek

### Simple Tips for Sticking to Healthy Habits

I have a magnet on my refrigerator that says: "Live today like you want tomorrow to be." It seems simple enough, doesn't it? If I want to be healthy tomorrow, I should make healthy choices today.

Making healthy food choices isn't so hard. Just visit your local Heinen's and load your cart with Fx™-approved foods like berries, broccoli, beans, and Brussels sprouts. Of course, you must also eat said nutritious foods, but again, that's the easy part!

So if it's really that simple, why is it so hard to stick to our goals? Because it's all too easy to slip back into our old habits without even realizing it.

#### **Old Habits are Strong, Stubborn, and Comfortable**

We all have a favorite pair of sweatpants or lounge wear. Mine are hideously plaid, kitty-imprinted and oh so soft and snuggly. In fact, the second I get home from work, I head straight to the bedroom like Clark Kent and in less than a minute, I'm transformed into Lounge Lady! My point is, we are attracted to comfort, and there's nothing more comfortable than old familiar habits.

If your current habits are working for you and your health is exactly what you want it to be, then there's no need to change. But if you're like most of us, there's always room for improvement.

Before you throw in the towel over past failed attempts at building healthy habits, let's explore some features of old habits.

It helps to think of old habits as individual bricks piled on top of each other, forming a giant wall. If we had it our way, we'd knock the wall down like King Kong with one mighty kick. In a way, that's what we do whenever we make a positive change in our eating habits, but we forget that the old habits are still alive and bubbling within us. They don't just crumble because we've decided to eat kale! Take a closer look at that wall and you'll notice the bricks are fastened together by mortar, a thick substance that hardens to create a strong bond between them.

Similarly, our old habits are very strong and must slowly be dismantled if we ever hope to be free of them.

*continued on page 3*

## HOW TO EAT FOR BALANCED BLOOD SUGAR

Managing a disease, like diabetes, isn't easy, but it doesn't always have to be gloom and doom. Here's some good news: There are simple behaviors you can adopt to help you manage disease and improve your overall health.

In this post, I share how indulging in an Fx™-based diet can help normalize elevated blood sugar. The emphasis here is on consistency and patience.

The whole process of eating for healthy blood sugar is a lot like planting a garden. When you plant a tomato seed, it doesn't sprout the day after you plant it, but if you water it with consistency, within five to six days—bingo, a sprout! If you expected a juicy red tomato on day seven, grew impatient, and yanked the sprout from the ground because it wasn't happening fast enough, you'd never know what it's like to experience the deliciousness of a fresh tomato. It takes time. So why should it be any different for us?

Before we dig into any diet details, let's first understand more about this condition affecting millions of people across the globe.

### Diabetes Defined

Diabetes is a condition caused by prolonged high blood sugar due to a problem with the hormone insulin. It develops when the pancreas either makes no insulin, not enough insulin, or plenty of insulin, but the cells become resistant to it. The result in all cases is too much sugar in the blood.

### The Effects of Diabetes

When blood sugar remains high over time, it can cause any number of health complications, including:

- Cardiovascular disease: disease of the heart and blood vessels
- Neuropathy: nerve damage in the legs and feet
- Retinopathy: disease of the retina of the eye
- Kidney disease

### The Underlying Cause of Diabetes

When you eat a carbohydrate-containing food like fruit, starchy vegetables, beans, bread, pasta, or sweets, your body breaks it down into glucose (sugar) molecules. Circulating glucose in your blood signals your pancreas to produce the hormone insulin to carry the glucose out of your blood and into your cells, where it can be used for immediate energy or stored for later use.

When your cells reject insulin, they are "resistant" and said to be in an "insulin resistant" state. This means glucose remains in the blood, creating an eventual diabetic/pre-diabetic state.

Aside from type 1 diabetes, where the pancreas makes little to no insulin, it is believed that insulin resistance is the real cause of excess sugar in the blood (as what happens in type 2 diabetes).

So, what contributes to insulin resistance? It's a combination of factors, like sleep deprivation, the amount and type of food you eat, lack of physical activity, and unmanaged stress.

To improve your insulin sensitivity and achieve balanced blood sugar, let's dive a little deeper into nutrition.

### How Food Affects Insulin Sensitivity and Blood Sugar

Countless books have been written about diet and diabetes and I'm not here to debate any of them. Rather, I want to offer a science-based approach that makes sense. What's more, it's a plan you can follow for the rest of your life without feeling deprived.

You've probably heard well-meaning people suggest that if you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, you should avoid or drastically cut carbohydrates from your diet. It seems like reasonable advice, doesn't it? After all, if carbohydrates break down into glucose (sugar),

and too much sugar in the blood is dangerous, then eliminating carbohydrates should take care of the problem. You may have even witnessed this for yourself if you regularly check your blood sugar and notice a spike after eating a handful of grapes or a ripe banana. It seems to confirm the "carbs-are-bad-for-blood sugar" theory.

The problem with this theory is that it's oversimplified and neglects an important side of the story: your baseline level of insulin resistance.

It turns out that carbohydrate-rich foods will spike your blood glucose if and only if your baseline level of insulin resistance is already high. And what causes insulin resistance? It's not insulin itself. It's actually eating too much dietary fat, which creates the symptom of excess insulin in your blood.

The truth is that healthy carbohydrate-rich whole foods only require large amounts of insulin when the total amount of fat in your diet is also high. So, if your meals are weighed down with butter, cheese, oils, and fatty meats, your body will demand more insulin to process the carbohydrates you eat. The longer this goes on, the more insulin resistant you can become.

### Improve Insulin Sensitivity with a Low-Fat, Whole Food, Plant-Based (WFPB) Diet

You can gain insulin sensitivity very quickly by following a whole food, plant-based (WFPB) diet and by reducing (not eliminating) the amount of fat you eat. If you are a meat-eater, you can achieve even better results when your portion of animal protein is more like a small side dish than a main course.

When it comes to carbohydrates, it's important that we don't lump them all into the same category. Sugary foods and beverages and refined flour products (bread, crackers, pizza, snack foods, etc.)

are not good for blood sugar, but the carbohydrates under Fx Pillars 1, 2, 4 and 5 are:

- Fresh or frozen leafy greens
- Fresh or frozen plain fruits and vegetables
- Legumes (peas, lentils, and beans)
- Whole intact grains (sprouted if you can): steel cut oats, quinoa, brown rice, farro, buckwheat, barley, etc.

We must not forget that our bodies were designed to safely shuttle glucose into our cells with the help of insulin. When this glucose comes from healthy and wholesome sources, we get the bonus of a whole slew of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and other health-protective components, including fiber.

After a short time eating this way, you may notice these, and other welcomed benefits take shape in your life:

- The ability to go 4 hours between meals without feeling ravenous

- Regular bowel movements
- More physical energy
- Improved mental clarity
- Healthier skin
- Improved sleep quality and duration

### A One-Day Low-Fat WFPB Meal Plan

Here are a few meal suggestions to give you an idea of what a low-fat WFPB day of eating looks like in real life. Feel free to add a small portion of animal protein if you'd like, such as one Heinen's pasture-raised egg or a few ounces of omega-3-rich fish (wild salmon, tuna, mackerel, sardines), Pasturebird chicken, Force of Nature grass fed bison, or Heinen's grass fed beef. All recipes can be found on Heinen's website.

- **Breakfast:** Cinnamon Quinoa Breakfast Bowl or Golden Hour Smoothie
- **Lunch:** Wild Rice and Mushroom Soup or Spring Vegetable Salad with Wasa sourdough crispbread

- **Dinner:** Mediterranean Zucchini Pasta Salad or Kale White Bean Skillet
- **Snacks:** Fresh fruit; Raw vegetables with Esti baba ghanoush for dipping; Balanced Tiger nutrition bar; Navitas Power Snacks

### Key Takeaway

We all want good health, but we must put in the work to make it happen. I can't think of anything more rewarding than seeing the fruits of my "labor" in the form of balanced blood sugar and a body full of energy, mental clarity, and an appetite satisfied by wholesome food. Trust me when I say that it doesn't take much to experience results you can see and feel. The key is consistency!

#### Source:

Mastering Diabetes: The Revolutionary Method to Reverse Insulin Resistance Permanently in Type 1, Type 1.5, Type 2, Prediabetes, and Gestational Diabetes by Cyrus Khambatta, PHD and Robby Barbaro, MPG

## SIMPLE TIPS FOR STICKING TO HEALTHY HABITS *continued*

### Dismantling Old Habits and Making Room for New

The real process of change is found in slowly breaking down the wall of old habits so that our new healthy habits can bear fruit, brick by brick.

I'd like to offer you four pieces of wisdom I've learned over the years that have personally helped me in my never-ending pursuit of wellbeing in body, mind and spirit.

**1. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.** Change is uncomfortable, and that's a good thing. Think about a time in your life when you accomplished something you were proud of. I'll bet the road to get there was a bit bumpy

and uncomfortable, wasn't it? It helps to keep in mind that these feelings aren't felt in vain, they mean that something beautiful is about to bloom.

**2. Be patient with yourself.**

Dismantling old habits and forming new ones is a process, so please remember to practice kindness and patience with yourself, just like you would a precious baby who is learning to walk.

**3. Forgive yourself.**

So you messed up... who cares! When you think of these little slipups as part of the process, you'll discover they are a necessary part of your success story. Don't reprimand, rejoice!

**4. Keep showing up!** Some days will be easier than others. Monday may have gone without a hitch and choosing the apple over apple pie was as easy as, well, pie. Then Tuesday rolled around, and the temptations were so strong you wondered if you were even the same person. No matter what, keep showing up! It may not feel like it, but every time you make the decision to show up, you wear a path to the new habit and send a strong message to your subconscious that says: "This girl/guy doesn't give up!"

*continued on the last page*

## KALE & WHITE BEAN SKILLET



A half-cup serving of Heinen's cannellini beans packs a whopping 8 grams of fiber: a key element for healthy blood sugar and sustained brain power. Mixed with kale, sun dried tomatoes, and a tangy apple cider vinegar-based dressing, this simple skillet is an easy way to eat healthy, even on the busiest of days.

*Servings: 4; Prep time: 10 minutes; Cook time: 10 minutes*

### Ingredients

#### FOR THE DRESSING

- 7oz. jar sun dried tomatoes in olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. Bragg apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 Tbsp. Heinen's dried basil
- 1/4 tsp. sea salt
- Fresh ground pepper, to taste
- 1 pinch Heinen's crushed red pepper

#### FOR THE SALAD

- 1 Tbsp. Heinen's extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 oz. fresh kale, de-ribbed and chopped
- 2- 15oz. cans Heinen's cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 jar of sun-dried tomatoes, chopped

### Instructions

1. To make the dressing, combine 2 tablespoons of the oil from the jar of sun-dried tomatoes with the vinegar, basil, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Set aside.
2. Add the olive oil and garlic to a large skillet.
3. Sauté the garlic over medium heat for one minute, or just until it begins to soften and becomes fragrant.
4. Add the chopped kale and 2 tablespoons of water to the skillet.
5. Stir and cook over medium heat until the kale has wilted.
6. Add the drained beans and chopped sun dried tomatoes to the skillet with the kale.
7. Continue to stir and cook until the beans are heated through.
8. Drizzle the dressing over the skillet and stir to combine.
9. Serve warm.

## SIMPLE TIPS FOR STICKING TO HEALTHY HABITS *continued*

### Key Takeaway

Each night before bed, I like to check-in with myself by asking: "Am I a better person today than I was yesterday?" A better caregiver for my body? A better human being to others? Did I love a little more than yesterday? I seem to sleep more soundly when the answer is yes.

I invite you to give it a try for yourself. But please remember, "better" doesn't have to mean by leaps and bounds. If you are even a mustard seed-size better than you were yesterday, that is enough to keep the momentum going long enough to see the fruits of your labor.

Heinen's Wellness Consultants are standing by to help you pave the way to healthy habits that stick! Stop by the Wellness Department and introduce yourself, or even better, schedule a free Club Fx™ Store Tour to discover new healthy foods for your journey.



Club Fx is a FREE program for Heinen's Tasteful Rewards members that offers education, nutrition tips, product recommendations and recipe inspiration for customers to live their healthiest lives. Interested in becoming a Club Fx member? Update your Tasteful Rewards account to ensure you get our weekly emails and access to personalized nutrition services!