

Using diet to stave off diabetes

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(HealthDay)—Diabetes has become a worldwide epidemic, but you can protect yourself with a healthier diet. And the same type of diet can help you manage diabetes if you already have it.

According to experts at Boston's Joslin Diabetes Center and the Harvard School of Public Health, specific foods that help reduce your risk include [green leafy vegetables](#), oat cereal, yogurt and dairy products, grapes, apples, blueberries and walnuts. Surprisingly, coffee and decaf java are also on the list.

Though [weight loss](#) for people who are overweight is often suggested, the researchers also found that even without weight loss, changing to a healthier diet helps stave off diabetes.

The quality of your fats and carbs matters more than the quantity. That means making choices like whole grains instead of refined ones, while limiting processed carbs in general and choosing fish and chicken in place of red and processed meats. Also, choose plant-based fats rather than [animal fats](#), which also promotes heart health. And aim to add other fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts, while limiting alcohol and skipping sugary drinks and foods.

If you find it more helpful to follow a set plan, there are many healthful diets that can be tailored to your personal tastes and calorie needs.

Diet Starting Points:

- Mediterranean diet.
- Low-glycemic index diet.
- Moderately low carbohydrate diet.
- Vegetarian diet.

Keep in mind that it's never too late to use diet to your advantage, even if you already have diabetes. People enrolled in Joslin's "Why WAIT" program, which includes a [low-carb diet](#) and regular exercise, not only lost weight and maintained it, but were also able to cut their [diabetes medications](#) by more than half.

More information: Click here to learn more about the Joslin "Why WAIT" program and other ways to [prevent or manage diabetes](#) through lifestyle changes.

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