

Treating diabetes one meal at a time

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Credit: Darren Lewis/public domain

Recent estimates project that as many as one in three American adults will have diabetes in 2050. The American Diabetes Association observes November as American Diabetes Month, and this year's theme is America Gets Cooking to Stop Diabetes.

Two [professors](#) from the School of Nutrition & Health Promotion at Arizona State University have studied how changing your diet can help manage the effects of diabetes.

This fall, assistant professor Karen Sweazea published a study that shows

the health benefits of consuming almonds in Type 2 diabetics. Over a 12-week time period, participants with poorly controlled Type 2 diabetes added 1.5 ounces of almonds to their diet. Participants experienced a 30 percent reduction in C-reactive protein levels, a marker of inflammation.

Carol Johnston, director of the [nutrition](#) program and co-author of the study, says that reducing inflammation in diabetics is important because it is linked to risk for heart disease.

"Of all the tree nuts, almonds have one of the most diverse nutrient profiles, including fibers, vitamin E, monounsaturated fats and arginine," said Johnston. "We know that all the nutrients in almonds have health benefits."

Sweazea says that one of the components in almonds, arginine, helps encourage your blood vessels to dilate more so that your blood pressure decreases. Most diabetics develop high blood pressure, which can worsen complications of diabetes, such as kidney disease and heart disease.

Spoonful of vinegar helps the blood sugar go down

Johnston and two of her students published a study that examined the effects of [vinegar](#) on markers of Type 2 diabetes in at-risk adults. Participants consumed a vinegar drink twice daily for 12 weeks. The study shows that consuming vinegar at the beginning of a meal reduces spikes in blood sugar, which keeps insulin production stable.

"People have been using vinegar to combat [diabetes](#) for two centuries," she said. "And much earlier, Hippocrates recommended vinegar because of its many health benefits."

The main component of vinegar is acetic acid, which research suggests

interferes with the digestion of starch. This means that less glucose is released from starch to be absorbed into the blood stream and cause high blood sugar. If pre-diabetics are able to stop blood sugar spikes, less insulin is needed and the risk for disease progression is reduced.

Consuming any type of vinegar will show these results, but Johnston suggests having wine vinegar because it is more palatable. She also suggests mixing vinegar into salad dressings and sauces. In order to get the best results, dressings should have a ratio of two tablespoons of vinegar to every one tablespoon of oil.

Kenneth Moody, instruction kitchen coordinator for ASU's Kitchen Café, has a recipe for raspberry balsamic vinaigrette dressing that incorporates vinegar in a beneficial and delicious way.

Provided by Arizona State University

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