



## Lots of fruits, veggies might stem diabetes

**I've been told that I'm "pre-diabetic." Should I cut way back on fruit? I know it contains a lot of sugar.**

First, for individual health-related advice, it's always best to talk directly to your doctor or, in cases like this, a registered dietitian, who could work with you personally to examine your normal day-to-day eating patterns and help you make improvements.

But if you're like most Americans, you likely aren't eating enough fruit. And your question indicates that you have the common misconception that eating sweets causes diabetes. It doesn't. It's caused by the body's inability to handle blood sugar, but that comes from many kinds of foods, not just those that taste sweet.

In fact, a recent study published in the journal *Diabetes Care* indicates that people who eat a lot of fruits and vegetables — and, even more importantly, a lot of *different kinds* of fruits and vegetables — may have a lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

The study included more than 3,700 adults in the United Kingdom and lasted 11 years. The researchers found:

- Eating more fruits and vegetables (about six servings a day) was associated with a 21 percent lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared with eating just two servings a day.

- People who ate a wide variety of fruits and vegetables — averaging 16

different types over the course of a week — were about 40 percent less likely to develop diabetes than those who averaged just eight different types.

It's important to note that the study doesn't necessarily prove cause and effect. But it is one more good reason why you might want to incorporate a wider variety of fruits and vegetables into your diet. Here are some ideas to do so:

- Even if you don't normally pack your lunch, pack a snack to have mid-morning or mid-afternoon. It can be one of the standards: an apple, orange, banana, grapes, baby carrots, celery strips or red pepper strips, or something totally new. Shop the produce section with a fresh eye to see what you might want to try.

- Buy large containers of vanilla or plain yogurt and, as you prepare individual servings, top with one-quarter to one-half cup of fresh or frozen berries.

- Add variety to salads by including spinach with the lettuce and topping with fresh blueberries or strawberries.

For more on the benefits of fruits and vegetables and ideas to include more in your diet, see the Fruits and Veggies Matter website, a partnership of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Produce for Better Health Foundation, at <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov>.

*Chow Line* is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu).



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**Editor:**

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