Can Tea Help With Diabetes?

Type II diabetes is one of today's most common health conditions. As the rate of obesity has increased in this country, so has the incidence of diabetes. It's becoming more and more important to understand how to prevent diabetes, as well as the best ways to treat it if we discover that we're already affected. Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, the hormone that converts sugar and other food into energy. The most common type of diabetes seen today is Type II, where insulin is produced (though sometimes not in a high enough quantity), but is not used properly. This results in a higher than normal level of blood glucose in the body. Type I diabetes is diagnosed in childhood, and results from an inability to produce insulin. Doctors are not entirely sure what causes diabetes, but we do know that family history plays a part. In addition, we know that people who are obese and who do not get regular exercise are at a much greater risk of developing Type II diabetes than those who exercise and maintain a healthy weight. Today, there are about 20.8 million people in the US with diabetes. Nearly one third of these people don't realize they have the disease. In addition, about 54 million people in the US are pre-diabetic, meaning their blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed with diabetes. Complications from diabetes include blindness, kidney problems, heart disease, stroke, nerve damage and foot and skin problems. Prevention is critical when it comes to diabetes, and even many people who are already pre-diabetic can reduce their blood glucose levels naturally to prevent their pre-diabetic state from turning into diabetes. In addition, some patients who already have Type II diabetes are able to control their condition with lifestyle changes. To protect yourself from diabetes, it's critical to maintain a healthy weight. Eat natural unprocessed foods that are rich in fiber and nutrients. Avoid sugar and white flour, because both of these foods tend to leave us with an excess of insulin. Exercise every day. Not only can exercise help you keep your weight in check, but it can help your body more effectively use the food you consume, helping to prevent your blood sugar levels constant. Exercising and maintaining a healthy weight are the two most important ways to prevent diabetes, and to help control your insulin even if you've already been diagnosed. But, scientists are also discovering that there might be a secret weapon in the fight against diabetes, and it's safe and simple. Drink tea. Both green and black teas have been shown to help control blood sugar levels. One study, in particular, performed by the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology in Calcutta, India, showed that tea had a significant effect on the blood glucose levels of diabetic mice. When the mice were given tea, their blood sugar levels stayed consistent and did not rise above normal levels. Tea, particularly green tea, has been shown to be effective in preventing, and even treating, many forms of disease. It has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and even cancer. And, some studies have shown green tea to even be an effective adjunct to traditional cancer therapies. Some researchers have found that traditional cancer treatments, like chemotherapy, are more effective when green tea is used in conjunction with the treatment. Tea helps keep insulin levels constant in the blood, helping to regulate it naturally. Though most studies showing tea as an effective health protector have recommended green tea over black, this study on diabetes found no difference between the two. So, whether your preference is green tea or black, it may be helpful in the fight against diabetes. For some pre-diabetics who are trying to ensure that their problems don't progress, adding tea to your diet may be an easy way to help get your blood sugar levels back to normal. Of course, you will need to continue with your healthy diet and exercise routine, as well. And, even for those who already have Type II diabetes, a regular regimen of tea may help you keep your blood sugar regulated with less medication, when used along with proper diet and exercise. Of course, as with any other alternative therapy, talk with your doctor. Tea is not designed to replace any medications you're already taking, and should not be used as a substitute for diet and exercise. Beware of drinking highly sweetened tea. Adding sugar to the tea may negate any benefits the tea offers. Use a doctor approved artificial sweetener if you like your tea sweetened. So, add some tea to your diet. Whether hot or cold, black or green, tea is good for you. And, particularly if one of your health goals is to prevent or treat Type II diabetes, tea may be a simple and effective way to help meet those goals.

About the Author

The answers presented to your health questions are not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

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