

If you want to see a change, you must make a change. For diabetes control, making change earlier is better.

Diabetes is a progressive disease – so the more out-of-control the sugars are, the faster the diabetes will progress. In fact, the first two years after diagnosis may be the most important time to gain better control of the diabetes.

Controlling portions of food, losing weight and increasing physical activity are all critical pieces of the puzzle.

Limiting carbohydrates at meals is important in order to decrease calories, lose weight and control blood sugars. If we limit carbohydrates, what do we balance our meal with? More vegetables & salads can help fill the plate. Protein needs to be with every meal.

Sources of protein can be from any meat, such as fish and chicken, as well as cottage cheese. There are other sources of protein available:

Eggs. One egg has 6 grams of protein and can be eaten in a variety of ways – scrambled, as an omelet, poached, hard-boiled, or in egg salad.

Almonds. One-quarter cup of almonds has 8 grams of protein. Be careful to monitor your portions as nuts have twice the number of calories as any other food group.

Greek yogurt. Check the label – the Greek variety has twice the amount of protein as the low-fat yogurt. Use as a snack to fill the stomach, but not upset the blood sugars.

Dried beans. Half a cup is a serving and has 8 grams of protein. Be careful as beans are also a carbohydrate and eventually break down totally into sugar.

Quinoa. This grain has 4 grams of protein in half a cup. It also is a carbohydrate and may cause the sugar to rise if the portion is too large.

Pumpkin seeds (Pepitas) have 9 grams of protein in each ounce. Add to salad or eat as a snack.

Don't wait for a "wake-up call" to cause you to make some changes. You can make small changes and maintain them while continuing to work on new challenges each week.

Blood sugars are influenced by more than blood sugars. Move, move, move!!! Try not to sit for more than 30 minutes at a time. Even doing leg or arm exercises while sitting helps to circulate the blood through the body and use up some of the glucose for energy.

What change do you plan on making this week? (Don't wait until Monday) to start – today is the day!

*Susan Smith, Ph.D., CDE, is a nationally Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE) and a specialist in the field of diabetes since 1988. Since 2002 she has worked with patients individually through all of the physicians in internal medicine and family practice at Visalia Medical Clinic.*  
ssmith@vmchealth.com

