

Diabetes Adviser

.....A quarterly publication from Marshfield Clinic

Use natural treatments with caution, check with your doctor



Quick tip

Cold and flu season is here. Preventing these common illnesses is a goal for everyone with diabetes. Two easy ways to protect yourself are:

- Get your flu shot.
- Wash your hands often using soap and water or hand sanitizer. Commonly handled items such as doorknobs, handrails, phones, money, menus and shopping carts can be the source of a nasty cold or flu bug.

Can something that is available without a doctor's prescription really help with blood sugar control? Today, people are turning to natural therapies to help with their health problems. Some over-the-counter dietary supplements such as herbs, vitamins and minerals are being examined to see if they can help people with diabetes.

Cinnamon, maple syrup, ginseng, chromium, magnesium, zinc and aloe vera gel are only a few of these natural therapies. It is not clear if cinnamon can help lower blood sugars. There is a disagreement with the two studies that have been done. Most doctors feel that up to one

teaspoonful each day will not do any harm, but may not help lower blood sugars.

A new study done by the American Chemical Society in San Francisco discovered that maple syrup contains high levels of phytohormone and abscisic acid. Researchers report that abscisic acid is a natural defense in controlling diabetes.

Ginseng should be used with caution, as it can raise blood pressure levels and decrease the effect of blood thinning medications like aspirin or Coumadin.

Conflicting information is common with many other natural therapy

options. Medicinal herbs are drugs and should be used with caution. They are not safer than other medications, and have not been tested or regulated for safety. With any natural therapy, it is important to check with your doctor.

Natural therapies are not considered strong enough to treat diabetes alone. They may be helpful in addition to the diabetes plan that is already in place. However, the most natural way to help your diabetes is to eat healthy portion sizes and be physically active. Even a small amount of exercise can help control blood sugar.

'Am I really hungry?

Use 'hunger scale' to learn when to start, stop eating

Do you ever watch television eating a snack, only to look down and discover the entire package is gone?

Many of us will eat mindlessly at one time or another. We get so wrapped up in what is going on around us that we don't even notice what we are eating.

So what makes you stop eating? Is it simply because it's mealtime, or does that donut look so appealing? To improve your eating habits and make positive changes in your diet, first ask yourself, "Am I really hungry?"

So what makes us stop eating? Is it because the plate is empty, your tummy is full or is it because you have always been told to clean your plate? Children are very good at starting to eat when they feel hungry and stopping when they are full. Most of us are born with this ability, but somehow, this is lost in adulthood.

Consider using this hunger scale before your next snack or meal. This handy tool can help you recognize actual physical hunger and fullness and can be used as a gauge to start and stop eating.

The hunger scale below is from Geneen Roth's new book, "Why Weight: A Guide to End Compulsive Eating."

Hunger-Satiety Rating Scale

1. Starving, dizzy, irritable
2. Very hungry, unable to concentrate
3. Hungry, ready to eat
4. Beginning signals of hunger
5. Comfortable, neither hungry or full
6. Comfortably full, satisfied
7. Very full, feel as if you've overeaten
8. Uncomfortably full, feel stuffed
9. Very uncomfortably full, need to loosen belt
10. Stuffed to the point of feeling sick

It's best to start eating at a 3 or 4 on the scale and stop at a 5 or 6. Listening to your body's signals of hunger and fullness can help you achieve or maintain a healthy body weight. It takes practice, but eventually, the memory of that overstuffed feeling will help you stop eating sooner. This will allow you to become a healthier you.

Calendar of events

Ladysmith Diabetes Support Group
Tuesday, December 7

5:30-6:30 p.m., Ladysmith Center
Always held first Tuesday of the month.
Call 715-832-2357 for more information.

Getting Ready for the Holidays
St Joseph's Hospital, Chippewa Falls
A seminar on healthy menu planning.
Free of charge, date to be announced.
Call 715-717-7689 for more information.

Recipe corner

Pumpkin Pie makeover

Crust:

- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ cup canola oil
- 3-4 Tbsp. ice water

Filling:

- 1-15 ounce can of pumpkin
- 1-14 ounce can fat-free sweetened condensed milk
- 4 egg whites
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- ½ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 425°F. Combine flour, salt in bowl. Drizzle in oil. Stir until mixture looks like coarse crumbs. Sprinkle with water one tablespoon at a time and stir until mixture holds together. Shape dough into flattened ball. Wrap and refrigerate for an hour or until firm. Roll out and place in a deep 9-inch pie pan. Crimp the top as desired. In a large bowl mix together pumpkin, milk, egg whites, salt and spices. Pour into

pastry shell. Bake 15 minutes at 425° and then decrease temperature to 350° and bake for another 35-40 minutes or until a knife inserted into the center of pie comes out clean. Cool. Makes one 9-inch pie. Yield: 8 servings, each serving - calories 230, carbohydrates 30 g., fats 5 g.

The following Marshfield Clinic Centers provide diabetes self-education programs: Chippewa, Eagle River, Eau Claire, Ladysmith, Marshfield, Menominee, Merrill, Minocqua, Mosinee, Oakwood, Rice Lake, Wausau and Weston. For more information, call 715-387-9357 or 1-800-782-8581, ext. 7-9357 or visit our Web site at <http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/patients/?page=diabeteseducation>.

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