



# DIABETES ONE DAY AT A TIME

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## Natural ways to increase GLP-1

By Suzanne Christman, MS, RD, LD, CDCES, BSN, RN

Are you tired of seeing all the commercials with the loud, excited people singing and dancing that they can lower their A1c value by taking a weekly GLP-1 injection? Have you tried to obtain the medication only to be denied by your insurance company? Can you afford to pay a thousand dollars a month for this medication?

### WHAT IS GLP-1?

Glucagon-like peptide -1 (GLP-1) is a hormone made by the body in the gut after consuming a meal.

### WHAT DOES GLP-1 DO?

- Releases insulin, a hormone from the pancreas, when you eat.
- Stops the release of glucagon, also a hormone that raises blood glucose levels.
- Slows how fast food moves out of the stomach. This slows the rise of blood glucose, makes you feel full, and may lead to weight loss.



# Natural ways to increase GLP-1 *cont.*

Good News, there are many foods we can eat to increase our natural levels of GLP-1. Let's look at three GLP-1 promoting nutrients.

## 1. Soluble Fiber

Soluble fiber aids digestion, lowers glucose and cholesterol levels. This fiber also helps keep the gut immune system healthy. Increase soluble fiber slowly and drink plenty of water. Adequate fluid intake decreases the risk of constipation, gas, and bloating.

Soluble fiber can be found in:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole grains (barley, oatmeal)
- Legumes (beans and lentils)
- Flaxseed
- Chia seeds

## 2. Lean Protein

Eating lean protein can satisfy your appetite because protein takes longer to digest. At meals aim for two to three ounces for women and three to four ounces for men. One ounce of protein equals 7 grams. For example, one large egg equals one ounce or seven grams of protein.

Lean high-protein foods include:

- Fish
- Chicken
- Turkey
- Lean Beef
- Eggs
- Cottage Cheese
- Soybeans and Tofu

## 3. Healthy Fats

### Monounsaturated fatty acids

(MUFAs) are unsaturated fats that are liquid at room temperature. These fats help reduce the risk of heart disease, promote weight loss, improve insulin sensitivity, and protect against inflammation.

Good sources of MUFAs include:

- Eggs
- Nuts: Almonds, pistachios, and peanuts
- Avocados
- Olive oil: contains the highest level of MUFA than any other oils on the market.

**Omega-3 fatty acids** are healthy fats that are required for many functions in the body. These fats promote heart, brain and eye health. They also help reduce inflammation, prevent and improve depression, asthma, migraines and diabetes.

Food sources of Omega-3 fatty acids:

- Fish: choose salmon, tuna, herring, sardines, mackerel, and anchovies
- Flaxseed and flaxseed oil
- Chia seeds

If you are looking for an overall healthy meal plan to help boost your natural GLP-1, the Mediterranean Meal Plan is highly rated for diabetes. The Mediterranean way of eating promotes food high in soluble fiber, lean protein and healthy fats.





# Are you Missing Out on Strength Training?

By Janie Jacoby, MS, RDN, LDN, CDCES

What do you think of when you hear “strength training”? Some people think of a gym, heavy weights, and bodybuilders. The truth is, strength training is so much more than that! Strength training has big health benefits, no matter your age or how big your muscles are. Plus, anyone can do it, even without special equipment.

## WHAT IS STRENGTH TRAINING?

Strength training, also called “resistance training,” is any activity where your muscles are working against a weight or other force. This force can come from weights, stretch bands, water (like water aerobics), or your own body (like squats or wall push-ups).

## BENEFITS OF STRENGTH ACTIVITY

- **Lower blood sugars**
  - Our muscles burn sugar for energy, so strength training helps lower blood sugar levels. Muscle tissue also burns sugar after doing an activity, so strength training has a lasting impact on lowering blood sugar.
  - Strength training helps insulin work better in the body. Insulin is what lowers our blood sugar, but in diabetes, insulin is not working as well. This is called insulin resistance, and physical activity of all kinds can help improve it.
- **Better quality of life and ability to do activities**
  - We need muscle strength for our everyday activities. For example, even getting up and down from a chair uses muscles in the core (abdomen), glutes, legs, and more. Training helps you keep up the strength to move around and do the things that you want to do. This also helps with healthy aging and lowering risk of falls.
- **Improved bone density**
  - Training does not just strengthen our muscles; it also makes our bones stronger. This lowers the risk of osteoporosis.

- **Improved sleep**
- **Boost in mood**
- **Improved overall health**
  - It can help manage, or reduce the risk of, many conditions. This includes heart disease, depression, back pain, arthritis, diabetes, dementia, and many more.

## EXAMPLES

There are many options for strength training that are low-impact on the joints, but high-impact on your health and well-being. To get started, you may want to look into classes at a rec center or look for videos online that meet your needs.

These activities can be adapted to your needs. For example, you can find seated or chair versions.

- Water aerobics classes.
- Practices like yoga, tai chi, or Pilates, which feature bodyweight strength movements.
- Lifting weights or household items like bottles or cans.
- Activities with stretch bands, also called resistance bands or exercise bands.
- Silver Sneakers classes, designed for people aged 65 and up, both in-person, or online. These are covered by many Medicare plans. Some videos are free for all on YouTube.

## HOW MUCH STRENGTH TRAINING?

Every bit counts! Guidelines suggest working up to doing at least two sessions of strength training per week, to get the most benefits.



## TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

- **Take it slow** when you start a new activity.
  - There is no need to overdo it—start with gentle movements for a short time, like 5 minutes. Slowly increase the amount of time and how intense your activity is. Listen to your body and do not push it to the point of pain.
- **Check in with your doctor** if you have any questions about what is safe for you. A qualified trainer or physical therapist can also be helpful to get ideas of activities.
- **Check your blood sugar** before activity and have a snack handy, especially if you take a medication that can cause low blood sugar, like insulin.
  - Know what to do if your blood sugar is too high or too low.
- **Have fun!** Find an activity you enjoy, make it a social activity, listen to music, or look for other ways to keep it interesting.

## Mexican Black Bean Soup

### INGREDIENTS

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 tsp olive oil
- ½ of medium onion, diced
- 1 pound of boneless, skinless chicken breast (cut into ½-inch cubes)
- 1 tsp (divided) Adobo seasoning
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 (14.5 oz) can fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ cup frozen corn
- 1 (15 oz) can black beans (rinsed and drained)
- 40 oz low sodium chicken broth

### DIRECTIONS

1. Spray a large soup pot with cooking spray. Add oil and onion and saute over medium-high heat for 3 minutes or until clear.
2. Add chicken with ¼ tsp Adobo seasoning and pepper. Cook chicken until slightly brown, about 6-7 minutes.
3. Add remaining ingredients (including the other ¼ tsp Adobo seasoning). Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.



*Enjoy this hearty soup on a chilly day. It is packed with fiber which may help boost your GLP-1. It also tastes great the next day!*

# The “best” diabetic app? Well, that depends...

*By Fred Maggiore, A member of Mount Carmel St. Ann’s Diabetes Support Group*

In earlier days of diabetes care, a person with diabetes (PWD) often had to track on paper, lifestyle choices and home blood glucose monitor results. In this technological age, there is an App for that. PWD can search and use Health Care apps to learn about and manage the status of their health, in between visits to their health care team (HCT).

There are a variety of apps that can track Lifestyle choices

- **For nutrition?** Apps can provide the nutrients and calories we consume.
- **For fitness?** Apps can record physical activity, steps walked, and calories burned.
- **For glucose meters or a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) device?** Apps can track your blood sugar values that are separate from the device manufacturer.
- **For insulin pumps or smart insulin pens?** Apps can track your insulin doses and times.

Currently, there are over 1,100 apps related to diabetes. If we search the internet for the “Best Diabetes Apps 2025” it will yield multiple articles which can be overwhelming. This article will touch on things to consider when finding the “Best” Diabetes apps for YOU, not necessarily the “Best” for a reviewer or article author.

## TECHNICAL ASPECTS

**Devices** - Smart phone, watch, tablet, I-Pad, or computer. A version of most apps will work on one or more of these devices.

**Operating System** – iOS, Android, Windows, and Mac. Begin by checking that your device has the latest system or software update. Be aware that the same “App” may behave differently on different operating systems.

**Sharing** – Many Health Care apps have a feature where you can share your data with your HCT and family. Is your HCT set-up for sharing data with the specific app? Do they suggest a specific app for you to use?

**Wearable Devices** – Some medical devices like CGMs (Dexcom, Libre) and insulin pumps (Medtronic, Tandem, OmniPod) have their own apps to download to a website or the cloud. Do these product’s apps feature an automatic sync with other apps? Or must you manually transfer data between apps?



**Who owns the data?** How easily can other apps share data once it’s entered (manually or automatically)? Does the app interface directly to other apps you use? Does the app allow for mass import or export of data?

**Cost** – Is the app free or does it cost money to use the app? Is there a “trial” period or an annual discount fee to join?

## WHAT DIABETES AND HEALTH CARE APPS CAN TRACK

### Coping and Support

- Are you interested in online Coaching access? 24/7, or on-demand, or at set times?
- Are you looking to join an on-line Social Networking community of other PWD to share information?
- Would you like support groups with regular meetings (In-person or on-line) where you can get immediate feedback or “Bulletin Board” style where you post a question and wait for an answer?

### Nutrition

- Can the app plan meals, suggest recipes, accept user-created recipes, generate shopping lists, and scan barcodes for nutrition facts?
- Does the app provide restaurant nutrition values or options to eat healthy when eating out?
- Can you take picture of your meal and receive the nutritional value?

### Exercise

- Do you want a step counter or know the miles you walked?

## The “best” diabetic app? Well, that depends... *cont.*

- You may want to join a gym and use their app.
- Medication Management
- Need a list of your medications and when to take them?
- Would you like medicine timing or refill alerts?

### Blood Glucose Management

- Whether you use a glucometer or a CGM device, there are apps that can update glucose readings or allow you to enter them manually.

### Reports and Data Analysis

- How do you want to view the data?
- What type of reports does the app offer?
- Do you need a printed report for your HCT?
- Do you want the app to analyze your data or recognize patterns?

### Other

- At diaTribe.org you can find a list of 42 Factors that affect Blood Glucose levels.
- What other factors are you wanting to track? How about weight, stress, or sleep management?

There are a lot of things that can impact one’s health. Apps can help capture the data you wish to follow. You can evaluate apps for Diabetes and Health Care to find the “Best” ones for YOU that aid you in your journey to manage diabetes.

In Part two of this series, we will review how to set-up an Evaluation Scorecard to decide which App(s) fit into your Diabetic Self-Management Program.

**Remember, well-managed diabetes is the leading cause of ... nothing.**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Enjoy the following events*

### AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION ALERT DAY

March 25, 2025 is Diabetes Alert Day. This annual event is held the fourth Tuesday in March. It is a one-day wake-up call for the public to take the Diabetes Risk Test to find out if they are at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes.

For more information, visit: [diabetes.org](https://diabetes.org)

### IN PERSON DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

These fun, informal sessions are for people coping with diabetes. Friends and family welcome.

Call **614-546-4582** to learn more.

#### Mount Carmel St. Ann’s

**FEB 26, MAR 26, APR 23, MAY 28**

6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

#### Mount Carmel East

**FEB 27, MAR 27, APR 24, MAY 29**

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

### VIRTUAL DIABETES 101

**MARCH 4** | 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

These free virtual classes cover diabetes basics, like blood sugar monitoring, medications, nutrition, physical activity, and weight management.

Call **614-546-4582** to register.

### SUGGESTED WEB SITES:

- American Diabetes Association
- CDC-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- National Institutes of Health
- Diabetes Advocates
- USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
- diaTribe
- Mount Carmel Healthy Living Center