

Understanding insulin resistance

Insulin resistance happens when the body's cells stop responding effectively to insulin. Insulin's role is to take blood sugar into the cells, and when the cells are resistant to insulin, high blood sugar may result. Over time, insulin resistance dramatically increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, weight gain, and metabolic disorders. Diet and lifestyle changes can significantly improve insulin sensitivity and reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Diet tips for regaining insulin sensitivity

1. Consume protein at every meal

Protein slows down glucose absorption, preventing blood sugar spikes and stabilising energy levels. Include tofu, tempeh, and legumes in your meal. At least one-quarter of your plate should be protein if you consume animal proteins; if you are consuming plant proteins, it should be up to half of your plateful.

Half plate plant based protein



Half plate non starchy vegetables

2. Choose fibre-rich foods

Fibre slows digestion and helps control blood sugar levels. Non-starchy vegetables (broccoli, spinach, cauliflower), legumes, and whole grains (quinoa, oats, brown rice) promote better insulin sensitivity by reducing glucose surges.

3. Limit refined carbohydrates and sugar

White bread, pasta, pastries, and sugary drinks cause rapid blood sugar spikes and contribute to insulin resistance. Instead, choose complex carbohydrates like whole grains and beans to keep blood sugar steady.

4. Increase healthy fats

Healthy fats help regulate blood sugar and improve cell membrane function. Include avocados, nuts, seeds, olive oil, and fatty fish (salmon, mackerel) to reduce inflammation and enhance insulin sensitivity.



5. Eat low-glycaemic foods

Foods with a low glycaemic index (e.g., quinoa, berries, lentils) release glucose slowly, preventing insulin surges and promoting sustained energy levels.

6. Consume apple cider vinegar (ACV)

Taking 1-2 tablespoons of ACV before meals can improve insulin sensitivity and help lower post-meal blood sugar levels.

7. Stay hydrated	Water helps flush out excess glucose and supports metabolic function. Aim for at least 8 glasses of water per day.
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8. Consider intermittent fasting	A 12–16 hour fasting window may help improve insulin sensitivity by allowing the body to use glycogen stores.
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9. Balance macronutrients	Combining carbohydrates with protein and healthy fats at each meal slows glucose absorption, reducing blood sugar fluctuations.
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Lifestyle tips for improving insulin sensitivity

1. Exercise regularly	+ Strength training increases muscle glucose uptake, improving insulin sensitivity. + Walking for 10–15 minutes after meals reduces post-meal blood sugar spikes. + High-intensity interval training (HIIT) enhances glucose metabolism and burns excess sugar.
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2. Manage stress	Chronic stress raises cortisol levels, which can lead to insulin resistance. Meditation, deep breathing exercises, and yoga can help manage stress and improve insulin response.
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3. Prioritise sleep	Inadequate sleep increases cortisol, which disrupts insulin regulation and increases cravings for high-sugar foods. Aim for 7–9 hours of quality sleep per night to support metabolic health.
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4. Avoid late-night eating	Eating close to bedtime can disrupt insulin function and lead to higher fasting blood sugar levels in the morning. Don't eat for at least 3 hours before bed.
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5. Limit alcohol and quit smoking	Excessive alcohol impairs glucose metabolism, while smoking increases insulin resistance.
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6. Monitor blood sugar	Tracking blood glucose with a continuous glucose monitor helps identify blood sugar spikes and helps you to identify their causes. This is an excellent way to see your reaction to food and stress in real time.
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7. Cold exposure	Cold showers or ice baths may improve insulin sensitivity by activating brown fat (metabolically active), which helps regulate blood sugar levels more effectively.
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