

Hunter-gatherer diet could help diabetics

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Latest research suggests that eating the type of food consumed by early humans during the Old Stone Age or Palaeolithic era may help in controlling type-2 diabetes. During 2.5 million years of human evolution, before the advent of agriculture, our ancestors consumed fruit, vegetables, nuts, lean meat and fish. Early humans did not consume cereals, dairy products, refined fat or sugar, which are all agricultural products.

Researchers at the Lund University in Sweden compared two groups of volunteers who had type-2 diabetes. All of them suffered from glucose intolerance, which meant they experienced raised blood sugar after consuming carbohydrates. They also suffered from coronary heart disease.

For a period of three months, the researchers put one group of 14 on a Palaeolithic diet and the other group of 15 on a Mediterranean diet.

The Mediterranean diet is a modern nutritional model inspired by the traditional dietary patterns of some of the countries of the Mediterranean basin, particularly Greece and southern Italy.

The Mediterranean diet consists of whole-grain cereals, low fat dairy products, fruits, refined fats, salt and vegetables. It also includes high consumption of bread, wheat, cereals, olive oil, fish, and red wine.

The researchers found that people with type-2 diabetes who followed the Palaeolithic diet managed their carbohydrate consumption much better, reported the health portal *Medical News Today*.

After three months, people who were on the Old Stone Age diet had significantly lower blood sugar levels and normal glucose level after consuming carbohydrates. Rise in blood sugar after consuming carbohydrates remained almost the same in people who consumed the Mediterranean diet.

The researchers said that the Palaeolithic group's better glucose tolerance was not

linked to changes in waist size or body weight. They were convinced that their improved handling of carbohydrate intake was due to their diet rather than total calories consumed or whether or not they lost weight.

The Palaeolithic group consumed more fruit and no grains or dairy products. The researchers suggested that perhaps, rather than looking at calorie intake, people should consider avoiding some of the foods that have entered our diet in the latter part of our evolution - this includes many of our modern foods.

Type-2 diabetes is a life-long disease marked by high levels of sugar in the blood. It occurs when the body does not respond correctly to insulin, a hormone released by the pancreas.

The disease occurs mainly in people aged over 40. The initial line of treatment is diet, weight control and physical activity.

The most common symptoms of type-2 diabetes are excessive thirst, increased urination, fatigue, and blurred vision.