

Ask Leyla: Are steel-cut oats better for my blood sugar?



Q: My brother-in-law was just diagnosed with prediabetes, with a hemoglobin A1C of 6.4. His trainer suggested he eat steel-cut oats as opposed to regular oatmeal because it does not affect your sugar like regular oatmeal. Is that true?

A: First, let's talk about Hemoglobin A1c. This test is a marker of average blood sugar over a three-month period. The prediabetes range is greater than 5.7 and less than 6.4. At 6.4, I would suggest your brother in law has frank type 2 diabetes.

Both prediabetes and diabetes are defined as conditions of carbohydrate intolerance. While steel-cut oatmeal may have less of an impact on blood sugar than quick-cooking or instant oatmeal, it still contains a lot of carbs—approximately 20-25 grams per serving. The fiber content is helpful in blunting a rise in blood sugar; however, this doesn't work for everybody. Adding a pat of butter or drizzle of coconut oil could help lower the glycemic load.

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If your brother in law is to eat oatmeal at all, it shouldn't be more than very occasionally given his high hemoglobin A1c. A qualified nutritionist can work with him to create an appropriate lower-carb diet plan and supplementation with the objective of lowering his A1c and reversing the trend toward diabetes.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN

Email your questions to RadioProgram@aol.com.