

## Reversing Diabetes with Fork and Knife

Speech from: Dr. Hans Diehl, 23. July 1999 at the Congress of the European Vegetarian Union in Switzerland.

Good morning

At one time, the diagnosis of diabetes was like a death sentence. It meant trouble, difficulties and many diseases. But the times have changed. Today diabetes can be disarmed and diabetes can be reversed. High blood sugar levels can be reduced and people are in most cases no longer dependent on insulin injections and pills. It is a new day for the treatment of diabetes.

The number of diabetics worldwide 135 millions. And it's still increasing!  
Ärzte Zeitung, Nov. 15. 1999

It's good news and all what people have to do is make some simple lifestyle changes. Let me give you some ideas. I'll give you some numbers from the United States which are in many ways, relatively speaking, comparable to Western societies. In most Western countries we find that those who have diabetes do not even know they have it. About half of all the diabetics don't know that they have the disease; they are not yet diagnosed. Those who know they have diabetes, one third is taking insulin, one third is taking pills and one third of people are taking a special diet which is usually a high protein diet. Why are we concerned about diabetes? Because it's one of the most powerful factors in the promotion of atherosclerosis which leads to heart disease and many other problems. Here you see the risk arch of heart disease, and diabetes is one of the powerful factors that promotes that disease. We know that 80% of diabetics die from atherosclerosis related diseases. These people must control their risk factors which are largely under control of diet. Please note atherosclerosis and diabetes. Diabetes promotes heart disease and stroke. Diabetes promotes kidney disease. Kidney disease is 18 times more frequently found in diabetics than in non diabetics. It is the number one cause of blindness. It causes urine impairment. It leads to foot amputations and is a powerful factor in impotence. And please note that in America, the increase of diabetes since World War II: we have seen a 700% per cent increase in diabetes, particularly with the development of larger bodies. It has doubled in America every 15 years and today the chances of becoming a diabetic for a newborn baby who lives to 70 years of age is one in five. One in five babies born today will become diabetics and the National Institutes of Health says: We have no medical cure. But we have a cure in the area of lifestyle medicine. What is diabetes? Very quickly. This is a normal person, there is a pancreas. The pancreas produces insulin and the insulin has the function of opening up every cell in the body so that blood sugar, the sugar in the blood, can leave the blood and enter the cell where the sugar is needed. A body works on the utilization of glucose. It is just like a car runs on gasoline, so the body runs on blood glucose. And here you see that insulin opens up these cell openings. It is like somebody pushes up the button at the doors opener and insulin does the job and then the glucose, the blood sugar, the glucose can go inside where the cell is waiting for the food. So once more, you have a pancreas which produces the insulin, the insulin has the function of opening the cellular gates, I mean the opener, the glucose can go inside, the glucose goes down in the blood stream and goes into the cell and everything works wonderfully well.

### **But, you have two types of diabetics.**

Type one. The juvenile diabetic, and that represents about 5% of all the diabetics in Western societies. But 95% are Type 2. Maturity onset diabetics. The disease develops around 40 years of age. Type one: these people, you see, are very slender. They have a pancreas but it produces no insulin, therefore the blood sugar builds up on the outside of a cell in the blood and the cell is starving. So these persons will always be dependent on insulin to be injected.

But then you have the Type 2 of diabetics, and I will talk to you about Type 2 of diabetics today predominantly. 95% of all diabetics are in this category, and here you see again a pancreas totally different from Type I. A different disease. Here you see the person is large. A corpulent American. And his pancreas is overactive. The pancreas is producing more and more insulin in trying to meet the demands and yet something does not work. Much of the blood sugar builds up on the outside of the cell. In Type I, we missed the insulin. Now we have insulin and we still become diabetics. Why? We have lots of insulin, but the insulin somehow is deactivated. It cannot reach the doorbell to ring the bell so that the doors open up and the blood sugar can go inside; only a small portion, and so the poor person with high blood sugar is always hungry, always thirsty; and after many years the pancreas becomes petite and then often times gives up and that person can become a Type I diabetic.

I do not want to spend too much time on those, but just remember Type I is fairly rare and Type II is very common. It happens to people over 40 years of age and develops very commonly. Why do we have so much diabetes, what do we do for diabetes? For many, many years we have used a certain diabetic diet. This diet was largely made of a fat because we had the mistaken notion that diabetics cannot handle carbohydrates, they cannot handle sugar and we never made the distinction between simple carbohydrates and complex carbohydrates. Between sugar and starch (amidon). They are different, they are totally different, specially if the starch is « naturbelassen », specially if it is a natural kind of a starch, that is not refined. It is totally different because the fibre contents slows down the absorption of a complex molecules. But we never understood this. And so we said: «Aha, the person is a diabetic because sugar is in the blood, therefore a person who is diabetic cannot use sugar and so therefore do not eat sugar and you are fine». We have been terribly wrong. And so if a person cannot use sugar, then we must eat fats and protein, and this has been unfortunately the guideline for how to treat diabetics. In 1991, 70% per cent of the diet came from fat, so these people died from atherosclerosis and from heart disease. In 1950, below to 40% to 35% of fat, now we say maybe we should have less than 30% fat. In our program in the USA where we reversed diabetes, 50% of all diabetics are no longer on insulin in four weeks. We use a 15% fat diet or less, a total vegetarian diet and a vegetarian «Voll-wert-nahrung». Unrefined foods. They will always have enough protein, we like to see at about 60-70 g no more. But most of the recommendations by the National Institutes recommend a diet that is of 30% fat, about 20% protein which is a high protein diet, so people are being told to eat more chicken, eat more fish and lean beef. So we provide people with a vegetarian diet which is very high in complex carbohydrates, over 70 per cent, as you would find in China and in most countries in the world where marketing has not yet brainwashed the people.

Here is the latest statement from the American Diabetic Association. It says about the use of the sugar: The scientific evidence does not justify the restriction of sugar. We are changing totally. We are not telling people: It is alright to eat some sugar, there is no problem with it. We have to change all of our thinking. But I want to open another door of our understanding. The true corporate in the development of diabetes is the enormous high-fat content of the Western diet. Of all the calories that we eat, 40% comes from fat. In a natural diet it is more like 5 to 15%. So we probably eat 3 times more fat. We can take medical students and we give them a high fat diet and within one week we can produce 50% diabetics. One week on a high fat diet. It has been done in 1927. It was done again in 1964. It has been done over and over again. If I wanted to do this with my medical students in diabetes, all I have to do is to tell them: eat all the fat, eat all the grease that you want for one week and I will have excellent chance to have 70% who will test diabetics in one week. And then I will give them one pound of sugar every day for one week, for 2 weeks for 10 weeks, but very little fat, and I cannot produce one diabetic in 11 weeks. So, we have to rethink. We have known this for many many years. I can go into all the science, but I want to continue with my presentation here.

[Dr. James Anderson] This is Dr. James Anderson. He did the very same experiment as we have done. He took medical students. He gave them one pound of sugar a day; no fat - no diabetes in 11-12-13 weeks. He gave them one pound of sugar, no diabetes. He gave them a high fat diet, and his medical students all wanted to commit the experiment because they were all given free fatty foods. They would go to McDonald's as often as they wanted to. And they all wanted to participate in the experiment. In one week the experiment was over - because 70% were tested as diabetics.

This is from the large Adventist Health study. This study that followed 30,000 people. Those who are vegetarians have the least amount of diabetes, those who are meat eaters have 400% more diabetes, which supports the idea since meat is very high in fat that fat is related here. In the world we can see in the next 20-30 years a dramatic increase in diabetes as the world embraces a more Western lifestyle. In 1933, Dr. Rabinowitch in Montreal documented the reversal of diabetes. How? He put the people on a very simple vegetarian, very low fat diet. In 1955, Dr. Inder Singh tried to duplicate the results and used a 11% fat diet natural foods, vegetarian diet. He had 80 diabetics on insulin. Fifty of these diabetics were off insulin six weeks. We have some other results. In the same road, in the English medical journal Lancet, on a very low fat diet, the insulin that the body usually produces begins to become active again and they will cure most diabetics within weeks.

I work as the Director of the Lifestyle Medicine Institute in Loma Linda / California and there we found out in four weeks by observing its patients of a basic vegetarian very low-fat diet that 85% of the patients on medication were able to stop their medications, their blood sugars were normal. They were no longer diabetics. 85%. Usually in two weeks. 50% of the patients with type II diabetics were actually able to stop their insulin in less than 4 weeks. I was amazed and it changed my whole outlook on how to practice.

I want to give you one more study which was published and sponsored by the Group of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) and which supports our city wide programs where we involved 3-4-5,000 people, and we changed the whole town. We changed the restaurants, we changed the physicians' attitudes, we changed the society and our aim is a cultural transformation. This group in Washington used a vegetarian diet: 10 % protein, 10 % fat, high starch, low in sugar, cholesterol free which means a vegetarian diet. Food as grown. High in fibre. It

was contrasted with the American Dietetic Association diet which is high in protein, almost twice as high, which is three times higher in fat, and which only supports 42% of the energy in starch, and it contributes to the American of cholesterol. So this is a American diet that is typically used for treatment of diabetes; it promotes chicken, and fish and lean beef relatively high in protein but still contains a good chunk of cholesterol and of course it is much lower in fibre. Now what are the results ? Here are the results: The blood sugars in this group were 59% lower than in the traditional diabetic diet applicated. Much less medication in this group here. Dramatic drops in the cholesterol as you always find with the vegetarian diet, weight loss was 16 pounds in comparison with 8 pounds. Vegetarian food is wonderful. You can eat as much food as you want. Just about - if you eat the right foods. And you loose weight. You eat more and you weigh less. But you have to choose your foods properly. There is a difference between a healthy vegetarian diet and a vegetarian diet. There can be a profound difference. That is what I always say: Foods as grown, simply prepared, without other fats, oil and grease and sugar. And the kidney function improves dramatically which was extremely important because the number one difficulty for diabetics is kidney disease: It is 18 times higher. But in this study here they found that the diabetes was managed with the diet, not only disappeared in most cases but the kidney function recovered; kidney disease reversed itself we have seen in our studies as well.

Germany has 4 millions type-2-diabetics. They produce about 25 billions DM of medical costs.  
 Ärzte Zeitung, Nov. 15. 1999

So I want to come to the conclusion now. There is no more scientific debate as far as I am concerned. There is only a political debate - do you understand? We have known this since 1921, we have known what we needed to do. The medicine is not only something that moves along gradually. The medicine today also has become a business. And so it takes a lot of education (Aufklärungsarbeit). We have no nutritional curriculum in medical schools today, and whatever is there is very minimal. We have to really work very hard with the system that does not move very easily but we have made a commitment to working with our colleagues. It does not help the cause to condemn, it only helps to light a candle. Prof. James Anderson, one of the foremost diabetologist in the world said: Some 50 to 75 per cent of Type II diabetics that are using insulin and 80 to 90% of patients who use pills, could normalize their blood sugars and be off medication within weeks if they change their diet. What are the changes should be made? To eat foods as grown, easy, simple, effective, inexpensive, delicious and fun. And yet people come to us all the time and say : «But I never knew about this, no one ever gave me the right diet». And that is the problem today in the treatment of diabetes. Many of us are still giving diets that are too high in protein, that are too high in fat, because we still have the mistaken notion that the diabetic cannot handle complex carbohydrates. It has always been the ideal diet to manage most diseases, and it will be the ideal diet for the treatment of diabetes, the reversibility of diabetes and - if you begin early enough - you can surely prevent this terrifying disease which has so many clinical consequences. A difficult disease to treat, and the answers are often times very simple and easy, but the problem is how to motivate those who prescribe the diet and those who have the disease. How do you motivate, how do you inspire, how do you do it in a loving concern and with patience. That is our challenge. The challenge that is – as was said so wonderfully earlier « Vor-Leben » – to live the lifestyle that is correct is the most powerful testimony pointing towards a brighter Millenium. Thank you so much !

Dr. Hans Diehl.

Letzte Aktualisierung: 19.08.2014

Weitere Infos:

- [Diabetes - An Ounce Of Prevention](#) [1]: About typ-I-diabetics and the role in the prevention of the American Diabetes Association (ADA).
- [Early exposure to cows' milk raises risk of diabetes in high risk children](#) [2] [BMJ 2000;321:1040 (28 October 2000)]
- [Reversing Diabetes with a low-fat vegan diet](#) [3], PCRM, 2007

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#### Links

[1] <http://www.notmilk.com/deb/011099.html>

[2] <http://bmj.com/cgi/content/full/321/7268/1040/d>

[3] <http://www.pcrm.org/health/diabetes/>

