

Is oatmeal good for people with diabetes?

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Oatmeal can be a good option for people with diabetes. Oatmeal has a low glycemic index (GI) score, and the soluble fiber and beneficial compounds in oats may help people manage markers of diabetes.

People with diabetes have difficulty either producing or using insulin. This means that they have to be aware of which foods are rich in carbohydrates, as these foods quickly break down into sugars, possibly leading to glucose and insulin spikes in the blood.

This article explores the health benefits of oatmeal for diabetes, as well as the nutritional profile of oatmeal and tips for adding it to the diet. The article also discusses the potential risks of oatmeal for diabetes.

Health benefits for diabetes

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[Oatmeal](#) might have several benefits for people with [diabetes](#), even though it is a [high-carb food](#).

Low GI score

The [GI](#) is a way to estimate how foods will raise [blood glucose levels](#) in the body. The higher the number, the higher the food raises blood glucose, also known as blood sugar.

Foods with lower GI scores are ideal for helping to keep blood sugar stable. These foods will typically not raise the blood glucose as far or as fast as high-GI foods.

Oat foods — such as oatmeal and muesli made from steel-cut or rolled oats — are low or medium GI foods, with a score [between 40 to 60](#).

Fiber-rich

[Fiber](#) plays an important role in [digestion](#), especially in someone with diabetes. Dietary fiber may help slow down the breakdown of sugars in the body. This may help prevent spikes in blood glucose and [insulin](#) levels.

Eating fiber-rich foods like oatmeal throughout the day may make it easier for people with diabetes manage their blood sugar levels.

The [American Diabetes Association](#) notes that adults should eat 21 to 38 grams (g) of fiber each day. A [cup of cooked oatmeal](#) adds 4 g of fiber to the diet.

Lower blood sugar

Oats contain specific types of fibers called beta-glucans.

A [2021 systematic review and meta analysis](#) that found adding oat beta-glucans helped reduce the blood glucose and insulin responses after eating carbohydrate containing meals among people both with and without diabetes.

The review authors noted that more studies are needed to better understand if this reduction in blood glucose and insulin response translates into meaningful benefits for long term diabetes management, like lowering A1c levels.

Additionally, the studies included in the review looked at purified oat beta-glucans and oats highly enriched with beta-glucans, so it is unclear if regular store-bought oats will yield similar results.

Heart healthy

People with diabetes may also need ways to manage other conditions, such as [high cholesterol](#).

Oats may be especially helpful for them, thanks to the beta-glucans.

A [2022 systematic review and meta-analysis](#) found that beta-glucans from oats may significantly decrease [low-density lipoprotein \(LDL\)](#) and total cholesterol levels.

Feeling full

Fiber-rich foods like oatmeal may also help [regulate appetite](#) and keep the body feeling satisfied for longer.

This may make it easier to avoid snacking throughout the day, which may help with overall blood sugar balance.

Feeling full may also help some people lower their total daily [calories](#). This may help them maintain their [ideal weight](#) or lose excess weight.

Temporary increase in insulin sensitivity

Eating oats may also help improve [insulin sensitivity](#) in each meal.

A [2022 review](#) found that oats and oat beta-glucans may help to improve HOMA-IR, which is a measure of [insulin resistance](#). This suggests there was an improvement in insulin sensitivity.

However, it is important to note that further research is necessary, and simply adding oats to the diet is not enough to improve insulin sensitivity permanently.