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nfm AT THE CORE OF NATURAL RETAIL

NFM Secret Shopper: What can reverse my type 2 diabetes?

Natural Foods Merchandiser
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How well do natural products store employees respond to customer questions on type 2 diabetes? Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, fact checks their answers.

The question: What can you suggest to help reverse my recent type 2 diabetes diagnosis?

Store (Independent natural foods store in the Northeast): You can take herbs and supplements, but they need to be in addition to dietary and lifestyle changes. It's important to work with your doctor. I'd ask him or her about [New Chapter's] Cinnamon Force, which has been shown to help regulate blood sugar. The herb Gymnema [sylvestre] is also commonly used.

NFM: Any specific foods or teas you'd recommend?

Store: Again, I'm not authorized to prescribe anything, but nettle tea is often consumed to regulate blood sugar. I recommend you buy it in bulk, not in little teabags, and use a French press to make really strong tea. Nettle tea is really cheap, which is great because you'll want to drink a lot. Make sure you take a multivitamin and fish oil daily.

NFM: Anything else?

Store: Be wary of getting too much information online. There's a lot of stuff out there, and some of it can be misleading. Talk with your doctor about your diet.

How did this retailer do?

Our expert evaluator, Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, medical director of Fibromyalgia & Fatigue Centers and author of *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!* (Fair Winds, 2010): The retailer sufficiently deferred standard medical care to a physician while addressing how to incorporate natural remedies. This second piece is important, in that it can help people augment the care they get from their physician, who may be unfamiliar with natural options. I particularly like that the retailer mentioned the importance of lifestyle changes and suggested a multivitamin. As a medical professional, I would add that the customer avoid sugar—stevia is a great alternative—and increase daily fiber intake and exercise.

People with diabetes should choose a multivitamin that provides at least 200 mg a day of magnesium because magnesium deficiency is routine in diabetics and contributes to heart disease risk, pain and fatigue. In addition, diabetics should look for a multivitamin with B6 (10 to 50 mg), B12 (250 to 500 mcg) and inositol (500 to 1,000 mg), which are necessary for nerve protection. The multi should also have 200 to 400 mcg of chromium to optimize insulin function.

Numerous natural treatments can help lower blood sugar. The retailer recommends cinnamon and nettle, both of which have modest benefits (the data on nettle is conflicting), but I prefer other options. I suggest 9 grams a day of brewer's yeast, which dropped blood sugar an amazing 40 percent in a recent study.



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