



How Going Plant-Based Helped Me Reverse Type 2 Diabetes and Drop More Than 100 Pounds

By Howard Bielich
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Before going plant-based, my diet was always what I considered “normal,” with lots of cheese and meat. Some of my favorite foods included ham and Swiss cheese sandwiches, pulled pork, rotisserie chicken, salmon, eggs, and bacon.

In 2017, I was caring for my wife, who has late-stage Alzheimer's. The stress and nonstop work involved took its toll on me. I ended up developing [type 2 diabetes](#), high blood pressure, high cholesterol, neuropathy, atrial fibrillation, and unbelievable fatigue. I also gained an excessive amount of [weight](#). I quit weighing myself after I hit 276 pounds, so I don't know what my heaviest weight was. But my pants size reached 48.

At that point I was no longer physically able to care for my wife on my own and placed her in a care facility about 30 miles away from our home. As I drove there each day to spend time with her, I was afraid of falling asleep at the wheel and drank copious amounts of coffee and chewed gum until my teeth were ready to fall out. Whenever I was at the facility, I noticed all the patients with amputated limbs resulting from diabetes.

Digging into the Research

Fortunately, it was around this time that I happened to come across [Forks Over Knives](#) and saw that diet was the only real possible way to reverse type 2 diabetes. I decided to go 100 percent in on the whole-food, plant-based lifestyle.

I researched everything I could find about diabetes and diet and found that excess fat—not sugar—is the [actual cause of the disease](#). So I decided to be very strict about not letting any overt fats from oil or even high-fat plants, nuts, and seeds into my diet. I think eggs and cheese were what I missed the most, but I got over those cravings in a month.

Shedding Pounds on a Plant-Based Diet

I was amazed at how fast I saw the weight start coming off, especially after eliminating oils and excess fats from my diet. Since making the switch, I've lost more than 110 pounds, much of it without any exercise.

I was able to reverse my diabetes within just a few months on this diet. The neuropathy in my feet took more than a year to recede, but it is gone now, as well. My blood pressure is normal, and so is my cholesterol. My last A1C reading (a measure of average blood sugar) was 4.7, well below the threshold for diabetes or even prediabetes. I had an ablation done for my atrial fibrillation, but I have had no problems since. And I no longer have to worry about which pills go into which section of the weekly pill box organizer, because I'm off all medications. The only thing I take is [vitamin B12](#).

Leading By Example

Today, at 69 years old, I'm thinner than I was in high school. I used to absolutely hate shopping for clothes, but now, it's actually fun. I never thought that I would be able to wear size 34 pants! People can't help but notice when you lose over 100 pounds, and every so often someone asks what I've done. That's when I tell them my story and explain how a whole-food, plant-based diet can help them as well. I try not to preach but to lead by example.

I'm fortunate that my daughter has adopted this way of eating, too, and she is a phenomenal cook. I love her beet burgers.

A year into this new lifestyle, I began walking regularly for exercise. Later I began running. Today I am biking, strength-training, and weight-training, as well. With the newfound energy that my whole-food, plant-based diet has given me, I have no

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problem staying awake on that 30-mile drive to visit my wife. I haven't felt this healthy in a very long time.

Ready to get started? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path. To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#).