

A woman and a young girl are smiling and working together to knead dough on a wooden surface in a kitchen. The woman is wearing a white shirt and the girl is wearing a white shirt and a colorful striped apron. They both have flour on their hands and faces. In the background, there are kitchen cabinets and various items on the counter.

NATURE NATE'S  
NATURAL  
**CHOOSE REAL**  
WITH *Honey*  
*Nutrition Edition*

# HOT TOPICS IN TODAY'S HEALTH SCENE

How Regulating Blood  
Sugar Manages Energy,  
Stress and Health

When you hear the term “blood sugar” it’s likely you think of ways to keep it down. However, it’s just as important to keep blood sugar from dipping as it is to keep it from quickly spiking. Despite what you might think, due to the carb-phobia in the media, glucose is the preferred source of energy for your body! This is especially true for your brain, central nervous system and muscles. Your body is constantly working to keep a steady stream of glucose in the bloodstream, and as glucose is used up for energy, your system will automatically alter other body functions in order to keep those levels stabilized.

When you monitor and regulate your blood sugar throughout the day, your making it easier for your body to do its job. The more balanced your diet is, the better you function physically, mentally, and metabolically. Blood sugar is maintained depending on food intake and hormones, which act as messengers, sending signals to regulate functions in the body.

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When blood sugar dips, and you don't have enough carbohydrates stored away (yes, we store carbs as carbs when we eat the right amount), your body senses that you're low on energy and responds accordingly. It signals release of extra epinephrine, also known as adrenaline. This hormone helps the body convert other substances (like muscle) into the glucose you're lacking. Unfortunately, it can also cause feelings of anxiety. Because the body also feels stressed, due to inadequate energy, it releases excess cortisol, or the "the stress hormone." Cortisol acts similarly to epinephrine, sending signals for your body's metabolism to slow and conserve energy.

Going too long without eating, or eating poorly balanced meals and snacks can result in lower energy levels and slowed metabolism. Other reactions can include mood disturbances that influence your productivity and relationships; changes in body composition, such as muscle loss; and frequent cravings for overly processed carbohydrates, to quickly elevate blood sugar. Excess intake of the latter (think white bread, pretzels, sweets, etc.) is what many people beat themselves up over the most, and worse yet, is what sets your body up for increased sugar fluctuations afterward.



### MEET KELLY JONES

Kelly Jones is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and Board Certified Specialist in Sports Dietetics. She is also a former Division I athlete who believes that eating real food and leading an active lifestyle are keys to not only physical health, but also mental health and happiness. Visit Kelly's blog [eatreallivewell.com](http://eatreallivewell.com)



## QUICK TIPS: 3 WAYS YOU CAN HELP YOUR BODY AVOID BLOOD SUGAR SPIKES THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

### 1. EAT BEFORE YOU GET TOO HUNGRY.

We already have stress in our lives and will be releasing some cortisol anyway. Why, then, go longer between meals and snacks when your body is starting to tell you it needs food? Rather than wait for pains in your stomach, or realizing you've gone too long without eating when you find yourself overly angry with your kids, pay attention to other body cues that you're hungry, such as low energy, poor attention span, headaches or irritability. When you notice them, eat!

### 2. INCLUDE FIBER, PROTEIN AND FAT EACH TIME YOU EAT.

This holds true for meals and snacks, unless you're within an hour of exercise. These nutrients slow digestion and the release of carbohydrates from meals into the blood. This means you'll feel full for longer, and avoid blood sugar fluctuations like spikes and crashes.

### 3. WHEN YOU WANT SOMETHING SWEET, CHOOSE THE RIGHT SUGAR.

By not honoring what your body wants to eat, it will likely backfire. This will increase your stress levels and may also trigger you to binge later. Choosing raw honey over processed sugar can slow down blood sugar spikes and subsequent crashes because it contains carbs, called oligosaccharides and fructose, which are absorbed more slowly. Pair your sweet treat with some protein and your blood sugar reactions will be in even better shape.

*Kelly Jones MS, RD, CSSD, LDN*

