

Eating earlier 'can help stave off diabetes'

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EATING 80% of your calories before 1pm could help ward off type 2 diabetes, according to a study.

Researchers have discovered that eating most of your food earlier in the day can reduce the amount of time that blood sugar is above normal levels.

The team, led by scientists from the New York University Grossman School of Medicine, recruited ten people with obesity and high blood sugar levels.

They compared early time-restricted feeding (eTRF) – when 80% of calories are consumed before 1pm – to a normal feeding pattern, when half of the daily calories are consumed after 4pm.

Participants were assigned to one of the feeding patterns for a week – and then swapped over for a second week.

Throughout the study, participants were given enough calories to maintain their current weight, and they wore blood sugar monitors throughout the process.

Analysis revealed that when the participants ate most of their calories before 1pm, the amount of time their blood sugar levels spent in the 'high' range decreased compared to the group who ate as normal.

Study senior author Jose Aleman said: 'We decreased the time these individuals were having high blood sugar levels with just one week of eTRF feeding.'

'The findings show that eating a majority of one's calories earlier in the day reduces the time that the blood sugar is elevated, thereby improving metabolic health.'

People with prediabetes are up to 15 times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes.

This group have blood glucose levels higher than normal but not enough to be diagnosed with diabetes, and they are usually overweight or obese.

Lead author Dr Joanne Bruno said: 'In our recent study, colleagues and I found that individuals who eat 80% of their daily calories within the first six to eight hours of the day can improve blood sugar fluctuations, reduce the time their blood sugar is elevated and potentially counter weight gain.'

Throughout the study, all participants' weight stayed the same.

'This type of intermittent fasting may prevent those with prediabetes and obesity from progressing to type 2 diabetes, offering a helpful dietary strategy for diabetes prevention,' Dr Bruno added.

As a result, the researchers said their study is the first to show that it is this particular type of fasting – regardless of weight loss – that can have the beneficial effect.

The findings of the research were presented at the Endocrine Society Annual Meeting in Chicago.