

# Health Topics

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## LOWERING BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS

- Q. I read in the newspaper that one-fourth teaspoonful of cinnamon would help lower blood sugar levels. I tried it and it does work. Are there any short or long-term side effects associated with taking cinnamon ?
- A. Most botanicals (plant-based/herbal) substances are complex and therefore may have a multitude of effects. Historically, ground cinnamon bark has been used for gastrointestinal (GI) upset. This includes use as an appetite stimulant, and as an antispasmodic. It has also been used to treat gas, parasites, and colds and flu. There is mixed information concerning cinnamon use in diabetes. Some cinnamon constituents may increase blood sugar levels, and others seem to lower blood sugar levels.

In the general population cinnamon is considered safe, however, it is not recommended in large doses during pregnancy or for women in childbearing years. The maximum oral dose is 2 to 4 grams (1 gram = 1000mg) per day. One-fourth teaspoonful is approximately 750mg. Ordinarily, there are no adverse reactions with cinnamon in reasonable amounts. However, since individual response will vary, be aware of any other changes that may occur.

There are other things you may want to consider in dealing with your blood sugar problem. It is well known that nutritional deficiencies can impact most disease states including diabetes. There are good multivitamins specifically for diabetics that address some of these needs. Supplementing with essential fats is also helpful and maintaining adequate hydration is also important.

The use of cinnamon as an approach to the treatment of diabetes is a symptomatic approach and should not be seen as a substitute for your body's nutritional needs, or the regimen recommended by your physician. While cinnamon may have helped you, I would recommend caution and encourage you to continue to monitor your blood sugar levels. Response to any medicinal product varies with the individual.

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