

This Is How I Will Reverse Type 2 Diabetes



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Disclaimer: Although this story covers medical topics, I want to make it clear that I am not providing medical advice. I am not a medical professional and do not have any credentials or certifications for practicing medicine. This story is my personal experience based on my unique characteristics and circumstances. You should find a medical professional whom you trust and research everything before making changes that affect your health and wellbeing.

The Big Doctor Appointment

After more than five years of not getting routine wellness exams, I decided to finally visit the doctor four days before my 41st birthday in September of 2018. I didn't have a specific ailment; I just decided it's time to assess my health and address any issues. I don't think I am alone. As long as you feel relatively healthy, why bother dealing with scheduling appointments, waiting at the doctor's office, dealing with insurance, etc.? At best it's a big hassle to find out nothing is wrong. At worst you still have the hassle and find out something IS wrong.

I navigated the same process most people do when going to the doctor. You schedule your first

visit. You have your physical, and the doctor orders lab work. You have another appointment for a blood draw. You get your results and schedule another follow-up appointment to finally get an answer to the question, "Well doc, how am I doing?"

For a fresh start, I decided to try a new medical practice and doctor. The office I selected prides itself on being cutting edge. They emphasize on-time doctor appointments (who knew this was an innovation). They even have an app that you can use to schedule appointments and send and receive messages.

ON SEPT 26, 2018 (NINE DAYS AFTER MY FIRST APPOINTMENT) I RECEIVED THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE THROUGH THE APP. THIS IS THE EXACT MESSAGE.
HI BRANDON,
YOUR LAB REPORT IS ATTACHED.
YOUR BLOOD COUNT WAS NORMAL.
YOUR BLOOD SUGAR WAS HIGH AND CONSISTENT WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES.
YOUR KIDNEY AND LIVER FUNCTION TESTS WERE NORMAL.
YOUR HBA1C WAS HIGH AT 9.8%. THIS IS YOUR 90-DAY AVERAGE BLOOD SUGAR.
PLEASE FOLLOW UP TO DISCUSS YOUR RESULTS AND TREATMENT PLAN
DR _____

This was a Wednesday. So, of course, I immediately started typing a message back with questions. Just like in Outlook I saw an out-of-office message. The doctor was out until Monday.

Let's review. I just found out I have type 2 diabetes, and the one doctor I just established a relationship with is out of the office. Needless to say, I was not happy. In fact, as you can imagine, I was pretty freaked out.

<https://theascent.pub/this-is-how-i-will-reverse-type-2-diabetes-3f97ed6ff1e5>

Type 1 vs. Type 2 Diabetes

Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that allows the body to convert food that has been broken down into glucose as fuel.

Type 1 diabetes is a chronic autoimmune condition that prevents that pancreas from producing insulin. Since type 1 diabetics suffer from a lack of insulin, they need to take insulin to survive. This condition does not apply to me, and for the remainder of this article when I refer to diabetes, it will be type 2.

Type 2 diabetes is when there is too much insulin in the body, and you have become insulin resistant as a result of higher-than-normal blood sugar.

Diagnostic Criteria for Diabetes

The most common test used to identify diabetes is the glycated hemoglobin (HbA1C) test. This test measures the average blood sugar level for the past roughly three months. A result below 5.7 is considered normal. A result between 5.7 and 6.5 classifies you as “pre-diabetic.” A result of 6.5 or higher classifies you as diabetic. Another test is for fasting blood sugar level. After an overnight fast, a healthy blood sugar level should be less than 100 mg/dL. A level between 100 and 125 classifies you as “pre-diabetic.” A result over 125 mg/dL classifies you as diabetic.

In addition to blood tests, symptoms of hyperglycemia (high blood sugar) can portend a diabetes diagnosis as well.

- Increased thirst
- frequent urination
- rapid, unexplained weight loss
- increased hunger despite weight loss, and
- fatigue

While these symptoms are common to all forms of diabetes, they occur more frequently in Type 1 diabetes, since the onset of type 2 diabetes is typically very gradual.

In other words, you can feel relatively healthy without having any significant issues and still have type 2 diabetes like me.

My diagnosis with Type 2 diabetes is based on the lab results of having an HbA1C reading of 9.8 (should be below 5.7) and a fasting glucose measure of 279 mg/dL (should be below 100).

All in the Family



Carroll O'Connor, who portrayed Archie Bunker on TV's *All in the Family*, was diabetic.

Unfortunately, diabetes runs in my family. At some point in his 60's, my dad was diagnosed with diabetes. I know he took medication for it, but it was uncontrolled for many years. It made his eyesight and circulation poor. He had to have a toe amputated. His hands curled back locking his fingers to the point where he could only use his two index fingers to type. Ultimately he was diagnosed with dementia, which I'm sure was due in large part to diabetes.

I also have older brothers and extended family members who have diabetes and who have been on medication for a while. As soon as I discovered this, I said to myself,

“I may be the last one to get on medication, but I will be the first one to get off it.”

What's so Bad about Diabetes?

Since the hallmark of diabetes is excess blood sugar, the complications affect any part of your body that receives blood flow (hint: everywhere).

Complications include the following:

Heart and blood vessel disease (68% of diabetics aged 65 and older will die of heart disease. Diabetes also increases the risk of a person having a stroke by 150–400%)

Nerve damage

Kidney damage (diabetic nephropathy is the leading cause of End Stage Renal Disease in the US)

Eye damage

Foot damage

Hearing loss

Skin conditions

Alzheimer's disease (some scientists now refer to it as type 3 diabetes)

Cancer (enough said)

It's all fun and games in the beginning when you are regularly visiting "Carb City," but trust me you do not want to experience any of these complications.

Is Type 2 Diabetes Reversible?

I was not happy with my experience or this doctor. For all the bells and whistles and talk of a "new kind of practice," it ended up being the same old hassle I remember. I felt the doctor's only answer was straight to the medication (Metformin), and his medical opinion gave me the bare minimum information. Hearing generic advice such as "make healthy lifestyle choices" is not helpful. Oh, and I had to purchase a blood glucose meter and test strips.

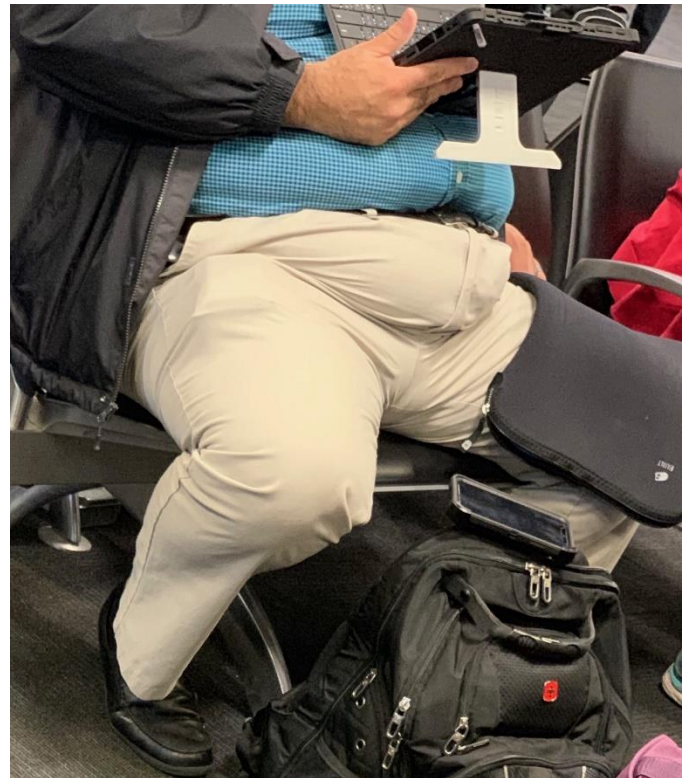
*Somehow my life went from
"pull my finger" to "prick my finger."*

For something this serious, I decided to get a second opinion. There is a discipline called [Functional Medicine](#) that is different from traditional Western medicine. Functional medicine takes a holistic approach to determine the root cause of a disease. I found a different medical practice with a doctor who specializes in Functional Medicine and scheduled an appointment. I am

happy to say that the difference between the two approaches is night and day.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have now arrived at what some may consider the controversial portion of my story. In my view, the difference between the first doctor and the second doctor illustrates the old and new way of thinking about type 2 diabetes. The traditional thinking of type 2 diabetes is as follows. Once you have it, you have it. You cannot cure it. You cannot reverse it. You can only manage it. I believe the first doctor follows this approach. Again this is type 2 diabetes and not type 1. One of the first things the functional medicine doctor told me was that my type 2 diabetes is entirely reversible.

Diabetes often shows up alongside other conditions that are collectively known as Metabolic Syndrome. Metabolic Syndrome is a cluster of conditions that occur together: high triglycerides, abnormal cholesterol, obesity (especially excessive fat around the waist), high blood glucose, and high blood pressure.



I call this phenomenon the "bifurcated belly" where the belly is so large that it is segmented into two halves by a belt kept at the waistline while sitting.

What current science indicates is that type 2 diabetes, and many of the associated issues, all have the same root cause — too much sugar. Fattening carbohydrates lead to high insulin. High insulin leads to fatty liver disease, which means fat is created in the liver faster than it can be exported. Fatty liver disease results in excess insulin that leads to insulin resistance. This is a highly-simplified summary. For a very detailed explanation, I recommend the book *The Diabetes Code* by Dr. Jason Fung.

It is possible you have other underlying conditions or mitigating factors that make your case unique. For me, the bottom line is that I agree with the functional medicine doctor. My type 2 diabetes is reversible, and I'm going to prove it and bring you along for the ride.

How I am Going to Reverse My Type 2 Diabetes

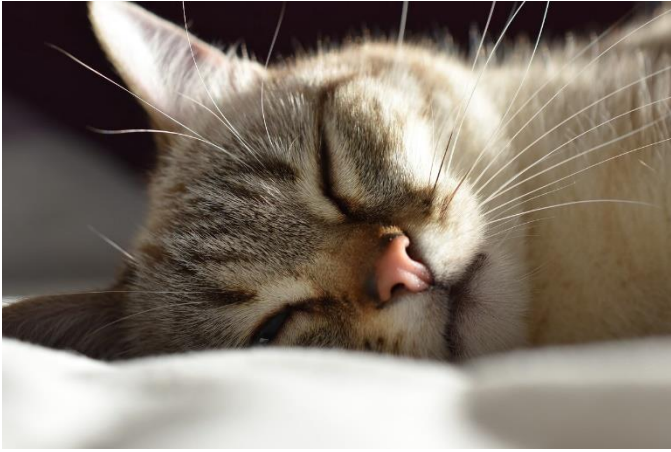
I have three areas of focus presently.

- 1. Lose weight.** For most of my adult life, I have gravitated around 250 pounds (113 kg/18 stone). In 2010 I reached my low point (or high point as it were) of 289 pounds (131 kg/20.6 stone). Even as recently as a year ago I was still at 225 pounds (102 kg/16 stone). I am happy to say that since my diagnosis I have lost 22 pounds (10kg/1.6 stone). Nothing like a wake-up call to give you motivation. I still have at least another 20 pounds to lose to reach a healthy weight for my height.



Why is it I always weigh more on the doctor's scale than mine??

- 2. Change my relationship with food to improve diet.** Whether I want to blame genetics or how I grew up, I have had a bad relationship with food. Food has always been about the flavor and texture. Forget about calories, portions, or whether food is actually nutritious for me. I have learned that I need to view food as fuel. When you pull up to the gas pump, you don't jump out of your car and slide your hands together and say, "Oh goody, I can't wait to put that premium gas in my car!" In a most non-enthusiastic way, you slide your credit card, grab the pump, and just pump the gas and get out of there. I need to start thinking about food as fuel. This doesn't mean I will no longer enjoy feasts, but it can't be a feast every meal every day. And for diabetics, refined carbs and sugar are the enemies. Not only am I changing WHAT I eat, I am changing IF I eat using intermittent and alternate-day fasting. Why don't we hear more about fasting in the mainstream media? My guess is because there's no money in it. There's no membership, no special food to buy, no recipes. Just don't eat! If you would like more information about fasting, I recommend the book *The Complete Guide to Fasting* by Dr. Jason Fung.
- 3. Improve sleep.** A good night's sleep is incredibly important, and some people argue it is actually even more important than diet and physical activity. For the last two years, I worked for a client on the East Coast. Arizona is either two or three hours behind, and the travel and staying on East Coast time disrupted my sleep schedule. I am using sleep tracking technology and have made improving sleep a top priority. I will have more to say about this in a future article.



Conclusion

Is it really that simple for me to reverse type 2 diabetes? Lose excess weight, eat healthy or fast, get physical activity, and improve sleep? As far as I am concerned, yes it's that simple.

Complexity is the enemy of execution. — Tony Robbins

One goal is to get off all meds. This includes the new medication for diabetes as well as a blood pressure medication I have been taking for over ten years. I know it's possible because in the last four months I have been able to cut the dose of my blood pressure medication in half, and then cut it in half again.

Another goal is to have lab results for my HbA1C and fasting glucose at or below the normal ranges without medication.

I have worked in the health insurance industry for 18 years. The health care system should really be called a disease management system. Unfortunately, most of the actors in the health care system do not have financial incentives to get you healthy and keep you healthy. Profits are made through visits, prescriptions, and tests. And guess who is ultimately footing the bill through increased taxes and rising insurance premiums and out-of-pocket costs?

Your best bet is minimize the utilization of this system by owning your choices that influence your health and doing what works for you to be well. Some illnesses are unavoidable. We get sick. Our

bodies break down, sometimes outside of our control. But I believe for most people with type 2 diabetes, the outcome is within your control.

If you have type 2 diabetes, all hope is not lost. When I first received my diagnosis it was shocking. When I educated myself, I got depressed. I believe I did this to myself. Yes, genetics have played a role, but many years of bad choices have led to this point.

In my opinion, type 2 diabetes it is not a death sentence. It starts with changing your belief about what's possible. Whether you are on medication or insulin or just ignoring it hoping it will go away, you can make changes to improve your health. [Virta Health](#) is just one example of a health care provider that believes type 2 diabetes is reversible and has data to back that up.

Thank you for joining me on this journey.

Be well, everyone!



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