

DO YOU HAVE INSULIN RESISTANCE?

Scientists have known since 2005 that insulin resistance can set the stage for Alzheimer's disease by gradually restricting the brain's ability to produce energy, but since most doctors don't test for this very common metabolic problem, most people don't even know they have it. The tests most doctors use to evaluate your metabolic health are the fasting glucose and hemoglobin A1C. These are good tests for type 2 diabetes, but they are not good tests for insulin resistance, because both of these tests can remain perfectly normal even if you have had insulin resistance for a long time. The additional metabolic tests included in the table below are much more useful in helping you estimate where you stand on the insulin resistance spectrum.

Test Yourself for Insulin Resistance

Test	Result
Fasting blood glucose	Below 100 mg/dl (5.5mM) is good; between 70 and 85 mg/dL (3.9 and 4.7mM) is ideal Above 100 mg/dl (5.5mM) strongly suggests insulin resistance
Fasting triglycerides	Below 100 mg/dl (1.1mM) is ideal Over 150 mg/dl (1.7 mM) makes insulin resistance very likely (Note: African Americans can have very low fasting triglycerides but still have insulin resistance)
HDL cholesterol	Men: higher than 40 mg/dL (1.04 mM) is good Women: higher than 50 mg/dL (1.3 mM) is good
Triglyceride-to-HDL ratio (Divide your triglycerides by your HDL)	Below 2.0 is good; the closer to 1.0 the better (Your triglycerides should be no more than twice your HDL)
Waist-to-height ratio (Divide your waist circumference by your height)	Below 0.5 is good (Your waist circumference should be less than half your height)
Hemoglobin A1c	Below 5.7% (39 mmol/mol) is ideal

Consider a Ketogenic Diet—but Look Before You Leap!

If you have insulin resistance, the ketogenic diet can be powerful medicine, because it lowers your glucose and insulin levels so effectively. These are very healthy changes but if they happen too quickly or without proper clinical supervision, it can be uncomfortable or even medically dangerous. The ketogenic diet can lower blood pressure, lower the levels of certain medications, or make some medications feel too strong. For all of these reasons, it is very important to consult with your health care providers *well before* starting any type of low-carbohydrate diet to ask for their guidance and support. This is particularly important if you have any existing medical problems or take any prescription medications. Educational resources for clinicians interested in learning more are included below.

More Information and Resources

Book (2024): [Change Your Diet, Change Your Mind](#) by Georgia Ede MD. A comprehensive guide that shows you how to combine the truth about brain food with the cutting-edge science of brain metabolism to optimize your mental health. Chapter 8 includes a detailed explanation of insulin resistance and how it can lead to Alzheimer's disease.

Psychology Today article (2016): "[Avoiding Alzheimer's Could Be Easier than You Think](#)"

CME Clinician Training Program: [Ketogenic Diets for Mental Health](#) A comprehensive course for practitioners of all backgrounds, taught by Dr. Ede. Available as live, virtual, small-group classes or as a self-paced video course.

[Clinician Directory](#): Looking for a practitioner to support you on your journey to better metabolic and mental health? Search this international database of practitioners who use ketogenic diets in their care of people with mental health concerns. A free public service available to all.