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'Losing my father is why I want to get the message out': Dr Michael Mosley's own health revolution



Medical journalist Dr Michael Mosley shares his deeply personal reasons for making his latest series, 'Australia's Health Revolution'.

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When you've got a large platform and the power of influence, the causes or subjects you choose to champion can be a big decision. In the case of renowned British medical journalist, presenter and best-selling author Dr Michael Mosley, the choice of what to focus his attention on has been easy – largely for personal reasons.

While Dr Mosley has explored topics ranging from sleep and intermittent fasting to parasites, e-cigarettes and the brain traits of psychopaths, in recent years, he's become keenly interested in type 2 diabetes, releasing *The 8-week Blood Sugar Diet* and developing his popular 5:2 diet further into [The Fast 800 book and method](#), which is aimed at people trying to reverse type 2 diabetes, or those who need to reduce their blood sugar levels. Now, he's made a landmark new series, *Australia's Health Revolution*, screening on SBS this month, which sees him guide eight diabetic or pre-diabetic Australians through powerful lifestyle changes, as well as putting his own body on the line by consuming an average Australian diet, to show just how quickly it can wreak havoc on your blood sugar levels.



So, why the passion for type 2 diabetes – and specifically, the power of weight loss, a healthy diet and exercise – to reverse it?

If he could go back in time...

Diabetes is a health issue that's painfully close to home for Mosley. His father developed type 2 diabetes in his fifties, and sadly ended up dying of complications of the condition, including heart failure and early onset dementia, at the age of 74. As Mosley explains in the new series, "I want to get the message out there, so it doesn't happen to other people."

The sinister complications of diabetes are something that many of us aren't fully aware of. "Type 2 diabetes is a disease you really don't want to get because it affects almost every system in your body: it's one of the leading causes of blindness, it doubles your risk of dementia, your risk of heart disease, it increases the risk that you will have a finger or two amputated by 17-fold and it also leads to impotence in men," Mosley tells SBS. "On top of that, it can cut your life expectancy by up to 10 years – one diabetes expert told me that he would rather get cancer."

According to Mosley, his father did all the seemingly 'right' things to manage the condition: he dutifully followed his doctor's advice and went on a low-fat diet and took suitable medication. Unfortunately, it didn't make a great deal of difference to his outcome. "I do think that if I could go back in time and offer him better advice than he received then, he might still be with us now," reflects Mosley. "I would advise him to start on a rapid weight loss diet... I would show him the research, and also advise that he eat a broadly Mediterranean style diet, one which is rich in healthy fats, has lots of veg and is quite high in protein. I think he would find that much easier to stick to."

Mosley's own health scare

Despite his expertise about what exactly it takes to live well, Mosley is the first to admit that good health doesn't come automatically. He had a [wake-up call of his own in 2012](#), when a routine blood test revealed surprising results: a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. He subsequently learned that it was due to stealthy weight gain, particularly around his internal organs and midsection, that had occurred over time without him even noticing. Frighteningly, he was around the same age as his father was when he was diagnosed with diabetes, so the whole situation felt ominously like history repeating itself.

"When I got the diagnosis, it was a major shock – I had seen what it did to my father and I did not want to go down that road," Mosley reflects. "It led me to make a science doc called *Eat, Fast, Live Longer*, which triggered my own interest in intermittent fasting and time restricted eating, both of which are now widely practised worldwide and which are the subject of extensive research."

Thankfully, Mosley was able to reverse his diabetes without having to take medications, by losing weight on an intermittent fasting diet, and his blood sugar levels have been normal ever since.

Despite successfully disarming his own ticking diabetes time bomb, Mosley says that staying diabetes-free still takes hard work. "I have to keep an eye on my weight and my waist if I am to keep my blood sugars in a healthy range," he says. "One thing I do is wear a tight belt, so I know when I am eating too much. When that happens, I put myself back on the fast 800 diet and soon shed a few centimetres." He says having "a brilliant cook" for a partner (his wife Dr Claire Bailey) is also helpful.

In the past, Mosley has discussed how no male member of his family has made it past 74. How does he feel now about his odds of defying that stat? Thanks to the cutting-edge dietary interventions he's across, he's optimistic. "I am fairly confident that I will make it beyond 74," he says. "I have put all my numbers into different online calculators and they all seem to think that I will make it to at least 84. We shall see."

For Mosley, it all comes down to quality of life – something that you absolutely need to be in good physical shape to ensure. "The main thing is I want to remain healthy for as long as possible, rather than live for as long as possible," he says.

The new landmark series *Australia's Health Revolution with Dr Michael Mosley* premieres Wednesday 13 October at 7.30pm on SBS and SBS On Demand.

This story contains general information only. Consult your doctor or medical professional for advice that is suited to your circumstances. If you need assistance with your diet or for dietary advice, always consult a GP, endocrinologist, diabetes educator or Accredited Practising Dietitian.

<https://www.sbs.com.au/guide/article/2021/10/05/losing-my-father-why-i-want-get-message-out-dr-michael-mosleys-own-health>