

# ACANTHOSIS NIGRICANS (AH-CAN-TOE-SIS) (NI-GRI-CANS)



## What is Acanthosis Nigricans?

Acanthosis nigricans is a common skin condition that causes thicker and darker skin that stays soft, described as **"velvety."** It is often found on the neck, armpits, groin, and other areas where skin rubs together.

## What are the symptoms?

Acanthosis nigricans can have no other symptoms and is itself harmless. However, it is important to [screen for possible underlying causes, which may be harmful.](#)

## What is the cause?

Acanthosis nigricans is usually due to an underlying medical condition, most often linked with [insulin resistance.](#)

This includes:



[Obesity](#)

and/or



[Diabetes/  
Prediabetes](#)

Other underlying conditions include other endocrine disorders, genetics, malignancy (rare), or drug reactions (rare).

**It is NOT caused by bad hygiene and cannot be spread to others.**

## Goals to achieve for next visit:



DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

• We recommend that you return in \_\_\_\_\_ for follow up with your child's pediatrician, or immediately if you experience any of the following:

- Many dark patches on your skin appear suddenly.
- Any feelings of depression, anxiety, or self-harm.

## What is the treatment?

[Treatment of the underlying medical condition](#) that is causing the acanthosis nigricans will lead to improvements in your skin.

- Weight loss is linked to large improvements in the skin of patients with obesity.
- Topical therapies are available to improve visual appearance.

[Discuss with your doctor the best form of treatment for you.](#)

## What can I do to prevent it?

**DO NOT:**



- Use bleaches or skin scrubs to attempt to improve the appearance. This can worsen your skin condition.

**DO:**



- Lifestyle changes, such as regular exercise and a healthy diet
- Consider a weight management plan
- Treat medical condition that may be causing this, like diabetes.

Below are some [exercise and nutrition recommendations](#) to help you and your clinician create a management plan for you to follow.

- Because acanthosis nigricans is often due to insulin resistance, an [insulin sensitive diet](#) is recommended.

## Exercise recommendations

At least **60 min** or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily, such as:

### Vigorous aerobic activity.

These are activities that get your heart pumping and breathing fast, such as:

Running      Jumping rope  
Soccer      Biking



### Activity that **strengthens muscles.**

These are activities with weight resistance, such as:

Push-ups      Sit-ups  
Climbing      Weight lifting




## Nutrition recommendations

(see back side of handout)


# ACANTHOSIS NIGRICANS

## Nutrition Recommendations: Insulin Sensitive Diet


### Meal Planning with the Plate Method



Use healthy oils, like olive and canola oil, for cooking. Limit butter and trans fat.



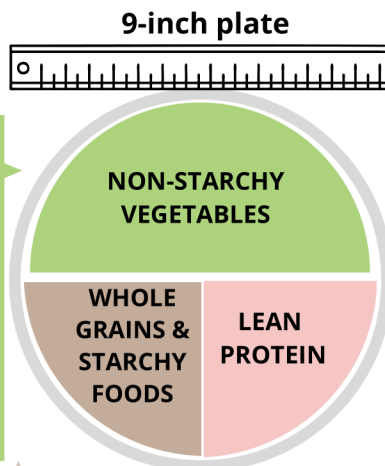
Eat fruit of all colors, like berries, apples. Eat the rainbow, it's a great dessert!



Drink water or natural fruit flavored water. Limit whole milk, juice, sugary drinks, tea and coffee.

Eat **1/2 plate** of non-starchy veggies:

- Spinach
- Green beans
- Broccoli
- Greens
- Cabbage
- Carrots



Eat **1/4 plate** of lean meats & other protein:

- Beans
- Tofu
- Chicken
- Fish
- Eggs

Limit bacon, deli meat, and other processed meats.

Eat **1/4 plate** of **whole grains**, rice, pasta, or potatoes OR eliminate grains and starchy foods and double up on non-starchy vegetables.

**Carbohydrates ("carbs")** are the sugars and starches found in foods. There are two types of carbs: 1) simple carbs and 2) complex carbs. Simple carbs are found in products like bread, cake, pasta, and juice and can raise blood sugar levels. Complex carbs are found in foods like fruits, non-starchy vegetables, and beans and will not raise blood sugar levels. It's really important to focus on **reducing simple carbs** in your meal plan to help the body with controlling and maintaining normal blood sugar levels.

**Go for it! Eat these whenever possible.**

- **Vegetables:** non-starchy fresh or frozen veggies (salad greens, green pepper, eggplant, onion, garlic, cauliflower, cabbage, carrots, broccoli, green beans, and more)
- **Grains:** steel-cut or rolled oatmeal, high-fiber bran cereal, bulgar, barley, quinoa
- **Beverage:** water, natural fruit flavored water, unsweetened non-dairy milks, low fat dairy
- **Fruits:** fresh fruits like apples, oranges, grapefruit, cherries, apricot, plum, bananas and more
- **Proteins:** legumes, beans, nuts, chickpeas, lentils, fish, lean meats (chicken, turkey), tofu, eggs

**Slow down! These foods can be enjoyed occasionally.**

- **Vegetables:** starchy veggies like potatoes, yams and corn
- **Grains:** pita bread, rye bread, couscous, pasta
- **Beverages:** full fat dairy
- **Fruits:** dried fruits like raisins and prunes or fruits canned in syrup
- **Proteins:** Red meat, cheese

**STOP and think! Limit these foods if possible.**

- **Vegetables:** fried veggies like okra, potatoes(french fries)
- **Grains:** white rice, white bread, cereals with added sugar, oatmeal with added sugar, pasta
- **Beverages:** juices, sodas, sports drinks, artificially flavored water, sweetened teas
- **Proteins:** fried or high fat meats like bacon, cold cuts, and other processed meats
- **Other:** donuts, waffles/pancakes, bagels, packaged crackers, honey, agave nectar, maple syrup, ice cream, frozen yogurt