

Small Steps Can Make A Big Difference In Preventing Diabetes



More fruits and vegetables and fewer sugary snacks in your diet can help you combat diabetes.

(NAPS)—Prediabetes is a serious medical condition that, if untreated, can put you at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. But the good news is that by making some healthy lifestyle changes, you can manage or even reverse your prediabetes and lower your chances of it developing into type 2 diabetes.

Prediabetes affects approximately 88 million U.S. adults and occurs when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is higher than what is considered normal and recommended for you but not high enough to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Most people with prediabetes are not aware that they have it, and there are usually no symptoms. People with risk factors for prediabetes include people who have overweight or obesity, are 45 years old or older, have a parent or sibling with diabetes, or are from certain racial and ethnic backgrounds.

“It is important for people with risk factors for prediabetes to learn if they have the condition,” says NIDDK Director Dr. Griffin P. Rodgers. “Even small steps to improve your health and manage prediabetes can make a big difference in reducing your risk for type 2 diabetes.”

Fortunately, making a few healthy lifestyle changes can help people with prediabetes improve their health and help avoid or delay developing type 2 diabetes. Here are some actions you can take:

- Ask your doctor for a blood glucose test to find out if you have prediabetes. You should be tested for prediabetes if you have overweight or obesity and have one or more other diabetes risk factors.
- If you need to lose weight, try focusing on losing a small amount of weight. The NIDDK’s Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) found that people who worked on making lifestyle changes to lose weight, including increased physical activity and healthy eating, could drastically lower their type 2 diabetes risk. The results

from the DPP helped the CDC build the National Diabetes Prevention Program (www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention), a lifestyle program for people at risk for type 2 diabetes available at locations across the country.

- Become more physically active by going on short daily walks. Or try participating in fun hobbies and activities like dancing, playing with your family or friends, or riding a bike.
- Try to spend less time sitting and watching television, playing video games or using social media.
- Swap sugary snacks for healthy fruits, vegetables or nuts. Or try trading white bread and white rice for high-fiber options, like whole wheat bread and brown rice.
- Use a food and drink diary or a smart-phone app to keep track of what you eat and drink. It can help you see when you tend to overeat or consume foods and beverages high in fat or calories.
- If you smoke, try to quit. Talk to your doctor or visit <https://smokefree.gov/> for tools and tips on how to become tobacco free.
- Try to get at least 7 hours of sleep each night.
- Take other steps to stay healthy. For instance, getting the COVID-19 vaccine (and booster shot, if eligible) and flu vaccine is highly important, especially for people who may be more likely to get sick from COVID-19, such as older adults and people who already have diabetes, obesity or heart disease, which are chronic conditions.

You don’t have to make all these changes at once. Any step you can take toward being healthier is a step in the right direction. And don’t be afraid to ask your doctor or loved ones for support. You’re not alone in this journey.

To learn more about prediabetes and diabetes, visit the NIDDK website at www.niddk.nih.gov.