

Prediabetes

What is it and what can I do?

What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes is a condition that comes before diabetes. It means your blood glucose (also called blood sugar) levels are higher than normal but aren't high enough to be called diabetes.

There are no clear symptoms of prediabetes. You can have it and not know it.

If I have prediabetes, what does it mean?

It means you are at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. You are also more likely to get heart disease or have a stroke.

How can I delay or prevent type 2 diabetes?

You may be able to delay or prevent type 2 diabetes with:

- Daily physical activity, such as walking.
- Weight loss, if needed. Losing even a few pounds will help.
- Medication, if your doctor prescribes it.

Regular physical activity can delay or prevent diabetes

Being active is one of the best ways to delay or prevent type 2 diabetes. It can also lower your weight and blood pressure, and improve cholesterol levels.

One way to be more active is to try to walk for half an hour, five days a week. If you don't have 30 minutes all at once, take shorter walks during the day.

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Weight loss can delay or prevent diabetes

Reaching a healthy weight can help you a lot. If you're overweight, any weight loss, even 7 percent of your weight (for example, losing about 15 pounds if you weigh 200), can lower your risk for diabetes.



Make healthy choices

Here are small steps that can go a long way toward building healthy habits. Small steps add up to big rewards.

- Avoid or cut back on regular soda and juice. Have water or try calorie free drinks.
- Choose lower-calorie snacks, such as popcorn instead of potato chips
- Include at least one vegetable every day for dinner.
- Choose salad toppings wisely—the calories can add up fast.
- Choose fruit instead of cake, pie, or cookies.
- **Cut calories by:**
 - Eating smaller servings of your usual foods.
 - When eating out, share your main course with a friend or family member. Or take half of the meal home for lunch the next day.

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- Roast, broil, grill, steam, or bake instead of deep-frying or pan-frying.
- Be mindful of how much fat you use in cooking.
- Use healthy oils, such as canola, olive, and vegetable.
- Start with one meat-free meal each week by trying plant-based proteins such as beans or lentils in place of meat.
- Choose fish at least twice a week.
- Cut back on processed meats that are high in fat and sodium. These include hot dogs, sausage, and bacon.

Track your progress

Write down what and how much you eat and drink for a week. Writing things down makes you more aware of what you're eating and helps with weight loss. Take note of the easier changes you can make to reduce your calories and start there.

You can delay or even prevent type 2 diabetes by increasing your activity and losing a small amount of weight.

Summing it up

Diabetes is a common, but serious, disease.

- You can delay or even prevent type 2 diabetes by increasing your activity and losing a small amount of weight.
- If you delay or prevent diabetes, you'll enjoy better health in the long run.

Get Started

- Be physically active.
- Make a plan to lose weight.
- Track your progress.

Get Checked

If you are at increased risk for diabetes ask your doctor about getting tested at your next visit. You can take our risk test at diabetes.org/risktest to find out if you are at risk for type 2 diabetes.

What is a diabetes prevention program (DPP)?

A CDC-recognized lifestyle change program is a proven way to delay and even prevent type 2 diabetes.

The program helps you change certain aspects of your lifestyle, like eating healthier, reducing stress, and getting more physical activity.

Learn more and find a program at diabetes.org/prevention.

Type 2 Diabetes

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a problem with your body that causes blood glucose (sugar) levels to rise higher than normal. This is also called hyperglycemia.

When you eat your body breaks food down into glucose and sends it into the blood. Insulin then helps move the glucose from the blood into your cells. When glucose enters your cells, it is either used as fuel for energy right away or stored for later use. In a person with diabetes, there is a problem with insulin. But, not all people with diabetes have the same problem.

The types of diabetes are type 1, type 2, and a condition called gestational diabetes, which happens when pregnant. If you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin, it can't use the insulin it does make very well, or both.

WHAT IS TYPE 2 DIABETES?

In type 2 diabetes, your body does not use insulin properly. This is called insulin resistance. At first, the pancreas makes extra insulin to make up for it. Over time your pancreas isn't able to keep up and can't make enough insulin to keep your blood glucose levels normal. Type 2 is treated with lifestyle changes, oral medications (pills), and insulin.

Some people with type 2 can control their blood glucose with healthy eating and being active. But, your doctor may need to also prescribe oral medications or insulin to help you meet your target blood glucose levels. Type 2 usually gets worse over time—even if you don't need to take medications at first, you may need to later on.

HOW IS TYPE 2 DIFFERENT FROM TYPE 1?

In type 1, your body treats the cells that make insulin as invaders and destroys them. This can happen over a few weeks, months, or years. When enough of the cells are gone, your pancreas makes little or no insulin and blood glucose becomes dangerously high.

People with type 1 diabetes take insulin by injection with a syringe, an insulin pen, or an insulin pump.

WHAT CAUSES TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Scientists do not know the exact cause of type 2 diabetes. However, development of type 2 diabetes has been associated with several risk factors. These risk factors include:

- history of hyperglycemia, prediabetes, and/or gestational diabetes (GDM)
- overweight and obesity
- physical inactivity
- genetics
- family history
- race and ethnicity
- age
- high blood pressure
- abnormal cholesterol

WHAT TREATMENTS ARE USED FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES?

The two goals of diabetes treatment are to make sure you feel well day-to-day and to prevent or delay long-term health problems. The best way to reach those goals is by:

- taking medications, if your doctor prescribes them
- planning your meals—choosing what, how much, and when to eat
- being physically active

HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY DIABETES TREATMENT IS WORKING?

Getting an A1C test at least twice a year helps you and your health care team keep track of how well you are controlling your blood glucose levels. A1C is part of your diabetes ABCs, which will tell you if your overall diabetes treatment is working. The ABCs of diabetes are:

A is for A1C or estimated average glucose (eAG)

Your A1C test tells you your average blood glucose for the past 2 to 3 months. It's the blood check "with a memory." Your health care provider may call this your estimated average glucose or eAG. The eAG gives your A1C results in the same units (mg/dl) as the glucose meter you use at home.

B is for blood pressure

Your blood pressure numbers tell you the force of blood inside your blood vessels. When your blood pressure is high, your heart has to work harder.

C is for cholesterol

Your cholesterol numbers tell you about the amount of fat in your blood. Some kinds of cholesterol can raise your risk for heart attack and stroke.

Type 1 Diabetes

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a problem with your body that causes blood glucose (sugar) levels to rise higher than normal. This is also called hyperglycemia.

When you eat your body breaks food down into glucose and sends it into the blood. Insulin then helps move the glucose from the blood into your cells. When glucose enters your cells, it is either used as fuel for energy right away or stored for later use. In a person with diabetes, there is a problem with insulin. But, not everyone with diabetes has the same problem.

There are different types of diabetes – type 1, type 2, and a condition called gestational diabetes, which happens during pregnancy. If you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin, it can't use the insulin it does make very well, or both.

WHAT IS TYPE 1 DIABETES?

In type 1 diabetes, your immune system mistakenly destroys the cells in your pancreas that make insulin. Your body treats these cells as invaders and destroys them. This can happen over a few weeks, months, or years.

When enough beta cells are destroyed, your pancreas makes little or no insulin. Because the pancreas does not make insulin, the insulin needs to be replaced. People with type 1 diabetes take insulin by injection with a syringe, an insulin pen, or an insulin pump. Insulin does not come in a pill. Without insulin, your blood glucose rises and is higher than normal, which is called hyperglycemia.

Type 1 diabetes affects about 5% of people in the United States with diabetes. In the past type 1 diabetes was called juvenile diabetes or insulin-dependent diabetes. It's usually first diagnosed in young people but it can occur at any age. Type 1 diabetes is much less common than type 2 diabetes.

HOW IS TYPE 1 DIFFERENT FROM TYPE 2?

In type 2 diabetes, your body does not use insulin properly. This is called insulin resistance. At first, the beta-cells make extra insulin to make up for it. But, over time your pancreas isn't able to keep up and can't make enough insulin to keep your blood glucose levels normal. Type 2 diabetes can be treated with oral medications, and/or insulin. Type 1 diabetes is always treated with insulin.

WHAT CAUSES TYPE 1 DIABETES?

Scientists aren't sure what causes type 1 diabetes. It is not contagious and it is not caused by eating sugar. Research is under way to find the exact causes of type 1 diabetes and how it might be prevented.

WHAT TREATMENTS ARE USED FOR TYPE 1 DIABETES?

The two goals of diabetes treatment are to make sure you feel well day-to-day and to prevent or delay long-term health problems. The best way to reach those goals is by:

- taking insulin
- planning your meals—choosing what, how much, and when to eat
- being physically active

HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY DIABETES TREATMENT IS WORKING?

Getting an A1C test at least twice a year helps you and your health care team keep track of how well you are controlling your blood glucose levels. A1C is part of your diabetes ABCs, which will tell you if your overall diabetes treatment is working. The ABCs of diabetes are:

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HOW DOES DIABETES AFFECT YOU DAILY?

Diabetes can affect how you feel each day. If your blood glucose level is too high or too low (hypoglycemia), you may not feel well. Keeping your blood glucose in a target range will help you feel your best.

People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin several times a day to keep their blood glucose under control. You also need to check blood glucose regularly and use the information to adjust the amount of insulin you are taking. Talk with your health care team about how and when to check your blood glucose.

While most of the day-to-day care of diabetes is up to you, your health care team is there to help you.