



HealthMatters

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Control your blood sugar, reduce your risk

Diabetes involves problems with a hormone called insulin. Normally insulin helps control our blood sugar levels, moving it from our bloodstream into our cells to be used for energy.

Types of diabetes

- **Type 1 Diabetes:** A condition in which the body doesn't produce insulin. This is an autoimmune condition. Only about 5% of diabetes cases are Type 1.
- **Type 2 Diabetes:** The body either doesn't produce enough insulin or the body doesn't respond to the insulin. Type 2 account for about 95% of diabetes cases.
- **Prediabetes:** A higher than normal blood sugar level. It is not high enough to be considered Type 2 diabetes, but without lifestyle changes, adults and children with prediabetes are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes.

If you have prediabetes, the long-term damage of diabetes—especially to your heart, blood vessels and kidneys - may already be starting.

Did you know? | More than one out of three American adults have prediabetes.

Nine out of ten people with prediabetes don't know they have it!

The good news

Progression from prediabetes to Type 2 diabetes isn't inevitable. Eating healthy foods, making physical activity part of your daily routine and staying at a healthy weight can help bring your blood sugar level back to normal.

Build up of fat in the body keeps insulin from working properly. If you have prediabetes, losing weight can cut risk of developing diabetes in half. One of the best ways to prevent or control Type 2 diabetes is to lose weight. By losing weight, the cells in your body will be better able to respond to insulin.

Why reduce your risk

Diabetes can lead to long-term complications such as artery, kidney, nerve, and eye damage. Diabetes also can increase the risk of heart disease.

Medication

All medications have side effects. Lifestyle changes—such as improving your diet—can control your blood sugar without side effects. Also, lifestyle changes can be just as important at protecting your health as medications.

Why exercise helps

While exercise can help control your blood sugar, to make significant improvements you must also change your diet. Aim for 150 minutes of exercise every week, including both cardiovascular and weight training exercise. *Up to 70% of cases of Type 2 diabetes could be prevented through the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.*

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Blood sugar friendly food ideas. | Controlling your blood sugar is not just about avoiding carbohydrates. You must choose the right carbohydrates.

Whole grains: rolled or steel cut oats, brown rice, barley, quinoa, whole grain bread, and pasta

Beans & legumes: black beans, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, white beans, pinto beans, split peas, lentils

Vegetables: spinach, broccoli, kale, onions, peppers, carrots, sweet potatoes, zucchini, radish, green beans, corn, potatoes, cauliflower, tomatoes, cucumbers

Fruit: blueberries, raspberries, oranges, apples, bananas, peaches, pears, pineapple, kiwi, grapes, mangoes, strawberries, melon

Nuts & seeds: walnuts, almonds, pistachios, pecans, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds

Timing | When you eat can be just as important as what you eat. To control your blood sugar, be sure to eat regularly throughout the day. This should include 3 meals a day, with healthy snacks in between meals to keep blood sugar levels steady. Remember not to skip meals. Also, avoid eating late at night. Stop eating at least 2 hours before going to bed.

Want to learn more?

Contact your provider for more information and to discuss your individual exercise and eating habits today!

Sources:

[What is Diabetes? | CDC](#), accessed October 15, 2021.

[Diabetes diet: Creating your healthy-eating plan](#), accessed October 15, 2021.

[World Diabetes Day | International Diabetes Federation](#), accessed October 15, 2021.

Healthy meal ideas for a day

Breakfast: Oatmeal - 1/2 cup dry rolled oats cooked until soft in 1 cup boiling water. Add 1-2 T ground flaxseed. Stir in 1 cup fresh or frozen berries. Top with cinnamon and honey (optional).

Lunch: Sandwich - 2 slices 100% whole grain bread. Spread with hummus and make a sandwich by filling with sliced peppers, spinach, tomato slices, and shredded carrots.

Dinner: Tacos - 1 can of black beans drained and rinsed. Add 1 T chili powder, stir and microwave for 1 minute. Fill corn tortillas with black beans and toppings of choice: brown rice, chopped tomatoes, shredded carrots, corn, guacamole, salsa, etc.

Snacks: fruit, nuts, veggies dipped in hummus

Prediabetes doesn't usually have any signs or symptoms, so talking to your provider about getting your blood sugar tested is extremely important. Contact your healthcare provider to schedule your annual health screenings and to discuss your individual eating and physical activity habits today!

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