

Diabetes, Type 2: Prediabetes



Type 2 diabetes is a lifelong disease that develops when your body cannot make enough insulin or cannot use insulin the right way. Insulin is a hormone that helps sugar from food enter your body's cells to be used as energy. Without enough insulin, the sugar cannot enter the cells, so it stays in your blood.

Over time, high blood sugar from type 2 diabetes can lead to problems such as heart disease, stroke, nerve damage, and kidney disease. Type 2 diabetes can run in families. You can prevent or delay getting type 2 diabetes by making certain lifestyle changes.

Prediabetes is a warning sign that you are at risk for getting type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes is also called impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose. Most people who get type 2 diabetes have prediabetes first. Most people with prediabetes will go on to develop diabetes, especially if they do not take steps to prevent it.

Staying at a healthy weight, eating a balanced diet, and getting regular exercise can help keep prediabetes from becoming diabetes.

What increases your risk for diabetes?

Risk factors include:

- **Your family history.** If you have a parent, brother, or sister who has type 2 diabetes, you have a greater chance of getting the disease.
- **Your ethnic background.** African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders are at greater risk for getting type 2 diabetes.
- **Your age.** As you get older, you are more likely to get type 2 diabetes. However, more and more children are getting the disease.
- **Having gestational diabetes or giving birth to a large baby.** Women who had gestational diabetes (diabetes that happens during pregnancy) or who gave birth to a baby who weighed more than 9 lb (4 kg) at birth are at greater risk for getting type 2 diabetes.
- **Having polycystic ovary syndrome.** Women who have polycystic ovary syndrome are more likely to get prediabetes and type 2 diabetes.

Caring for yourself at home

If you have prediabetes:

- **Limit the amount of calories, sweets, and unhealthy fat you eat.** Your doctor or diabetes expert can help you learn how to eat right so that your blood sugar level stays steady.
- **Lose weight if you need to.** Even losing a small amount of weight can help.
- **Try to exercise at least 2½ hours a week.** Bit by bit, increase the amount you do every day. You may want to swim, bike, or walk.

- **Manage other health problems, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol.** Exercise, healthy eating, and/or medicine can help with these goals.
- **If you smoke, quit.** Quitting smoking might help you reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes and heart disease, and avoid other health problems that make diabetes worse. Quitting can also reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke. If you need help to quit, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. They can raise your chance of quitting for good.
- **Take medicine if you need to.** Your doctor may suggest metformin to help reduce the amount of sugar made by the liver. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.

Regular checkups and tests

It's important to have checkups as often as your doctor suggests. You may also need routine tests, such as blood sugar and blood pressure tests.

Getting immunizations to prevent illness may help keep your blood sugar level in balance.

Do you have any questions or concerns after reading this information? It's a good idea to write them down and take them to your next doctor visit.