

# All About Pre-Diabetes

## What is pre-diabetes?

Pre-diabetes is a condition that can lead to type 2 diabetes and heart disease. When you have pre-diabetes, your blood glucose (sugar) levels are higher than normal but are not high enough to be called diabetes. Diabetes can lead to many health problems, so it's better to prevent it in the first place. You can take steps to reverse pre-diabetes and delay or prevent type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

## Why do I have pre-diabetes?

You are likely to develop pre-diabetes when you have certain risk factors. Your chances of having pre-diabetes go up if you

- are age 45 or older
- are African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- are overweight
- are physically inactive
- have high blood pressure (140/90 mmHg or higher) or if you take medicine for high blood pressure
- have low HDL cholesterol (35 mg/dL or lower) and/or high triglycerides (higher than 250 mg/dL)
- are a woman who had diabetes during pregnancy
- have been diagnosed with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

## How can I reverse pre-diabetes?

You can reverse pre-diabetes by

- cutting back on calories and saturated fat
- losing weight
- increasing your daily physical activity

If you're overweight, losing 5 to 10 percent of your total weight can help you a lot. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds, your goal would be to lose 10 to 20 pounds.



Work with your health care provider to take care of your pre-diabetes.

## How do I decide what to do?

You don't have to make big changes. Small steps can add up to big results. Ask your health care provider for a copy of Toolkit No. 1, *All About Your Risk for Pre-Diabetes, Type 2 Diabetes, and Heart Disease*. Check out the ideas for eating less and moving more.

Your health care team can help you make a plan. Talk about ways to be active, such as

- walking for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week
- being more active throughout the day by parking further from the store, or walking around the house during commercials.

Make a plan to eat less fat and calories. You can meet with a dietitian to talk about what to eat and how to lose weight. You might try

- starting each dinner with a salad of leafy greens. Salad provides nutrients and fills you up. Then you might eat less of any high-calorie foods that might come later.
- switching from regular soda and juice to no-calorie water.

## Are there any medicines to treat pre-diabetes?

If you're at very high risk for diabetes, your health care provider might give you a medicine to help prevent or delay diabetes. For most people, eating less, being more active, and losing weight work better than taking medicines.

## How often should I be checked for pre-diabetes?

If you have been told you have pre-diabetes, have your blood glucose levels checked every year. Your health care provider may want to check your glucose levels more often, especially if you're taking a medicine for pre-diabetes.

## What else should my health care provider check?

When you have pre-diabetes, your health care provider should also check for signs of heart disease and blood vessel problems. For example, your health care provider might check your blood pressure and your cholesterol. Talk with your health care team about what to do if your blood pressure or cholesterol levels are too high. Making wise food choices, staying active, and taking medicines (if needed) can help you stay healthy.

## What does having pre-diabetes mean for my health in the future?

Having pre-diabetes is your early warning system. Take action now and avoid the problems that diabetes and heart disease could bring. Small steps can make a big difference in your health. Choose 2 or 3 small steps—start today to reverse your pre-diabetes.

### Real-Life Stories from People with Pre-Diabetes

I had my blood glucose level checked last year and was shocked to find out I had pre-diabetes. I was a little overweight then. And I hadn't been exercising because I was busy working and taking care of the kids. But it really scared me to learn I was at risk for type 2 diabetes. I cut back on sweets and ate veggies and fruit instead. I also bought a pedometer—a step counter. When I first started, my goal was 7,500 steps every day. Then after a couple of months I changed my goal to 10,000 steps, 5 days a week. I lost 15 pounds! I feel much better now. Today I found out my blood glucose level is back to normal. I feel good about what I've done for my health.

—**Julia B., age 49**

*diagnosed with pre-diabetes last year*

### Online resources from the American Diabetes Association

- Visit [www.diabetes.org/prediabetes](http://www.diabetes.org/prediabetes) to learn more about managing your pre-diabetes.
- For recipes and information about meal planning, see My Food Advisor™, an online tool, at [www.diabetes.org/MyFoodAdvisor](http://www.diabetes.org/MyFoodAdvisor).
- Ask your health care provider for more Toolkit titles on changing habits, physical activity, losing weight, and healthy eating.

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