

LIVE WELL



What Goes Up Can Come Down

Could you have prediabetes? Having prediabetes means that your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but they are not yet high enough to be considered Type 2 diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, 70 percent of people with prediabetes will progress to full-blown diabetes if it's left untreated.

Hearing that you have prediabetes can be overwhelming, but it is also a chance to prevent or delay diabetes. Prediabetes can often be reversed, and blood sugar levels returned to a normal range, with simple lifestyle changes.

Approximately 84 million American adults have prediabetes, and 90 percent of them don't know they have it. That's because prediabetes typically has no symptoms and often goes undetected. However, there are several simple blood tests that can show if you have prediabetes, including the A1C test.

Risk factors for prediabetes include:

- Being 45 years or older.
- Being overweight.
- Having a close relative with Type 2 diabetes.
- Being physically active fewer than three times a week.
- Having had gestational diabetes.

African Americans, Latino Americans, American Indians, Pacific Islanders and some Asian Americans are at a higher risk of developing prediabetes. Be aware of your risk factors, and ask your doctor if one of the blood tests is right for you.

If you do have prediabetes, you can prevent or delay the onset of Type 2 diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends managing your weight, getting active and eating a healthy diet. Incorporating small changes into your daily routine can add up to make a big difference.

Manage your weight.

- Losing a small amount of weight can help reduce your risk of diabetes. The CDC recommends losing 5 – 7 percent of your body weight, which is 10 – 14 pounds for a 200-pound person.
- Don't do it alone. Involving friends, family members or coworkers can provide a support system. Lifestyle changes are long-term changes, and having people cheering you on can help you stick with it.

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Get active.

Regular exercise can help you lose weight and regulate blood sugar levels. The CDC recommends getting at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week. That's 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Remember to check with your doctor first before starting any exercise program.

- If you haven't been getting regular exercise, start with five to 10 minutes a day, and gradually build up to 30 minutes.
- Aim to get active doing things you enjoy, whether that's working in your yard, playing basketball with friends, swimming laps or taking your dog for a walk.
- Schedule time on your calendar for physical activity. Make an exercise schedule and stick with it.

Eat a healthy diet.

It can be hard to maintain big changes to your diet all at once. Start small and gradually add changes. Talk to your doctor about what changes will be beneficial for you.

- Forget frying. Try roasting, broiling, grilling, steaming and baking instead.
- Cut out drinks with added sugar, like soda and fruit juice.
- Keep a food diary to keep track of what you're really eating. It can be eye-opening.
- Take some time to plan meals each week. See where you can swap in healthier options, like brown rice in place of white rice or a quick salad instead of a fast food meal.
- Focus on produce, whole grains and lean protein, like chicken and fish.

It can be challenging to make lifestyle changes last, but staying motivated can help stop the progression of Type 2 diabetes.

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