

# Prediabetes

Millions of Americans have prediabetes, a condition that raises the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Also referred to as impaired fasting glucose or impaired glucose tolerance, prediabetes occurs when your blood glucose (blood sugar) levels are higher than the normal range but not high enough to be diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. If left untreated, prediabetes may develop into Type 2 diabetes. Fortunately, changes in lifestyle — such as managing food choices and increasing physical activity — can help return blood glucose levels to normal.

## **What Are the Risk Factors?**

A direct cause for prediabetes has not been determined, but excess body fat and inactivity are two key factors. There are few symptoms associated with the onset of prediabetes. You are at higher risk if:

- You are 45 or older
- You have an overweight or obese body mass index (BMI)
- You have an immediate family member with diabetes
- You are not physically active
- You have a history of gestational diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure or high cholesterol

## **What a Prediabetes Diagnosis Means**

With prediabetes, your body may be producing less insulin, your insulin sensitivity may be decreasing, or a combination of both. Insulin regulates the level of blood glucose helping your body turn carbohydrates into energy. Having high blood glucose puts you at risk for developing some long-term effects associated with diabetes such as blindness, damage to nerves and kidneys, and circulatory system problems.

## **Ways to Manage Prediabetes**

Healthy lifestyle changes can help to reverse prediabetes and prevent Type 2 diabetes. Everyone with prediabetes can slow the disease progression by following these strategies:

- Participate in regular physical activity. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week.
- If your BMI falls into the overweight or obese range, aim for a small amount of weight loss (5% to 7% of your current body weight).
- Follow a balanced eating pattern that includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein foods and low-fat or fat-free dairy products.
- Work with a registered dietitian nutritionist to help you make lasting healthy habits.

## **A Healthy Meal Plan**

Following a balanced diet and eating meals at consistent times can help with blood glucose control. Glucose comes primarily from the foods we eat, specifically carbohydrates — and it's not just sweets. A variety of healthful foods contain carbohydrates. While all carbohydrate-containing foods affect your blood glucose levels, you do not need to cut carbohydrates out of your diet! When putting together a meal plan, include a variety of food choices from each of the food groups.

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