

Spotlight on Health

Prediabetes

More than 84 million American adults have prediabetes. People with prediabetes often go on to develop type 2 diabetes, the type of diabetes mostly related to an unhealthy diet and lifestyle in adults. Type 2 diabetes can lead to major health problems. Prediabetes usually doesn't cause symptoms, so most people don't even know they have it.¹ The good news is that you can take steps to help prevent type 2 diabetes. These steps are particularly important if you find out that you have prediabetes.

This newsletter will focus on what prediabetes is, who is at risk, and how you can work with your healthcare provider to get tested. In addition, you will learn what you can do if you find out you have prediabetes.

What Causes Prediabetes?

Prediabetes and diabetes are related to a hormone called insulin. Insulin helps control the amount of glucose in your blood. When you have prediabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin. Or your body makes enough insulin but can't use it properly. In either case, your blood glucose levels will tend to be higher than they should.

Prediabetes Risk Factors

You cannot control some of the risk factors for prediabetes, such as your age and race. People who are 45 years or older have a greater risk of developing prediabetes than younger people. Studies have shown that some races and ethnicities are at greater risk. These include African-Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, Pacific Islanders, and some Asian-Americans. You may also have a greater risk if you have a parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes.

You can control some risk factors for prediabetes, such as being overweight, being physically inactive, and smoking. Others, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure, may be controlled to some extent through diet, exercise, and medications.

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

About 70% of people with prediabetes develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years.² Steps you can take to prevent, or even reverse, prediabetes include:³

- Quitting smoking: If you are a smoker, quitting or reducing the amount you smoke can reduce your risk.



National Diabetes Prevention Program

If you find out that you have prediabetes, you can join a lifestyle-change program recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Joining can help you learn the most effective way to lose weight, become more active, and prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Classes can be taken in person or online, and cover topics such as:

- Eating healthy
- Increasing physical activity
- Dealing with stress
- Tracking your meals and activity
- Setting goals
- Staying motivated

To find a class near you or an available online program visit the following website: nccd.cdc.gov/DDT_DPRP/Programs.aspx

- Losing weight: If you are overweight, the American Diabetes Association recommends you lose about 7% of your body weight.
- Watching your diet: You can try to eat less fatty foods, red meat, and food or drinks that contain added sugar. You can also try to eat less.
- Exercising: The American Diabetes Association recommends that you exercise about 2.5 hours each week. The intensity should be similar to a brisk walk.

Together, diet and exercise are especially effective in preventing type 2 diabetes.⁴ Diet and exercise not only help you lose weight, but also help lower your blood glucose level, blood pressure, and cholesterol.⁴

One way to keep on track with all of this is to join a lifestyle-change program such as the National Diabetes Prevention Program (see sidebar on page 1). Joining a program like this can give you the tools you need to help reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.³

How Your Healthcare Provider Can Help

You can have prediabetes and not even know it. That is because it may not cause any symptoms. So if you think you might have prediabetes based on your risk factors, you can talk to your healthcare provider. He or she can order tests to determine if you have prediabetes. Your healthcare provider can also assess your risk for developing type 2 diabetes. By knowing your status, you can start to take action.

You can also take a prediabetes risk test at the following website and share your results with your healthcare provider: doihaveprediabetes.org/prediabetes-risk-test.html

How the Laboratory Can Help

Quest Diagnostics offers tests that can help your healthcare provider find out if you have prediabetes. If you are between the ages of 45 and 64, Quest can also provide you and your healthcare provider with a risk score that estimates your risk of developing diabetes in the next 8 years. The score is based on a physical exam, your family's health history, and your laboratory test results.

Additional Information

For more information, visit questdiagnostics.com/home/patients/tests-a-z/prediabetes/what-is-prediabetes, or these helpful websites:

- National Diabetes Prevention Program: cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/index.html
- MedlinePlus: medlineplus.gov/prediabetes.html
- American Diabetes Association: diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/prediabetes/?loc=atrisk-slabnav

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4. Orozco LJ, Buchleitner AM, Gimenez-Perez G, et al. Exercise or exercise and diet for preventing type 2 diabetes mellitus. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2008:CD003054.