



# Questions & Answers About **PREDIABETES/ DIABETES** and Your Health

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**N**early 34.2 million Americans have diabetes, according to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2018). In addition, an estimated 88 million U.S. adults have prediabetes. Prediabetes affects 34.5% of adults age 20 and older and 47% of Americans age 65 and older.

## **Q: What is prediabetes?**

Prediabetes is a condition that can lead to Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Prediabetes means that your blood sugar level is higher than normal but not yet high enough to be classified as Type 2 diabetes. You can take steps to prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes and heart disease. On the positive side, prediabetes can be an opportunity for you to improve your health.

## **Q: Do I have prediabetes?**

You are likely to develop prediabetes when you have certain risk factors. You are at higher risk for prediabetes if you:

- are 45 or older
- are African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Asian American or Pacific Islander
- have a parent, brother, sister with diabetes
- are overweight
- are physically inactive
- have high blood pressure or you take medicine for high blood pressure
- are a woman who had diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)

Those who should be screened for prediabetes include overweight adults age 45 and older and those under age 45 who are overweight and have one or more of the risk factors.

## **Q: How can I prevent or delay diabetes?**

You can prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes by losing 5 to 7% of your weight. For someone who weighs 200 pounds, 7% is only 14 pounds! Motivate yourself by remembering the benefits of losing weight, such as a healthier heart, more energy and improved self-esteem. Ways to prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes include:

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

If you are overweight, your first goal should be to lose weight. One key issue in losing weight is controlling portion size and making healthful food choices that cut down on the amount of fat you eat. Each gram of fat has significantly more calories than carbohydrate and protein grams.



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## Q: What should I eat?

What you eat is important, but so is how much you eat of certain foods. Here are a few tips to make better food choices:

- eat more foods that are broiled and fewer foods that are fried
- cut back on the amount of butter you use
- eat more fish and chicken and only lean cuts of beef
- add more fruits and vegetables to your diet

Having prediabetes or diabetes does not mean that you cannot eat certain foods. The solution isn't to avoid foods with sugar in them, but to limit how often you eat processed, high-sugar foods, and watch the portion size when you do indulge. Choose foods low in fat and calories and high in fiber. Focus on fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

## Q: How much time should I exercise?

Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. Take a brisk walk, ride your bike or swim laps. Try not to let more than two days go by without some exercise.



## Q: How does having prediabetes affect my health in the future?

If you take no action, prediabetes in many cases will progress to Type 2 diabetes within five years. Losing 5 to 7% of your weight through lifestyle changes that include more healthful eating and increased physical activity can prevent prediabetes from progressing to Type 2 diabetes. Take action today to prevent Type 2 diabetes and avoid the complications that diabetes and heart disease could bring. Small steps can make a difference in your health. Take one to two small steps today.

**For more information,  
visit these websites:**

**American Diabetes Association**  
[www.diabetes.org/](http://www.diabetes.org/)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[www.cdc.gov/diabetes](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes)

Visit [www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food)  
for more information about food and nutrition.

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