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How Can I Prevent Diabetes?



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I have been told I have prediabetes and am at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. What does this mean in terms of my health, diet and lifestyle?

Receiving any diagnosis can be overwhelming and scary. This handout will help give you a better understanding of prediabetes and answer some of your basic questions about prediabetes.

What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes is a warning sign that you are at higher risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes is when your blood sugar level is higher than normal but not yet high enough to be classified as Type 2 diabetes. Without any lifestyle changes, your blood glucose levels may continue to rise. By committing to eating a healthful diet, losing weight or maintaining a healthy weight, and being physically active, you can help restore your blood glucose to normal.

How is prediabetes diagnosed?

To diagnose prediabetes, one of three tests may be performed:

- **Fasting plasma glucose test (FPG):** This test usually is conducted in the morning, after you have fasted for at least eight hours. If your FPG is between 100 and 125 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL), you may have prediabetes. If your test came back higher, you may have diabetes.
- **Oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT):** Similar to the FPG, you must fast for at least eight hours before the OGTT. On the day of your test, your blood glucose levels are checked twice: before and two hours after you drink a special drink. If your blood glucose level is between 140 and 199 mg/dL after drinking the sugary drink mixture, you have prediabetes.
- **A1C:** This test measures your average blood glucose test for the past two to three months. If your blood glucose level is 5.7 to 6.4 percent, you may have prediabetes.

How can I prevent prediabetes?

The most effective way to prevent prediabetes is to make lifestyle changes that increase healthful eating behaviors and physical activity. The American Diabetes Association recommends the following lifestyle changes:

- ✓ **Eat Well**
Create a meal plan that includes fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, poultry and dairy products, and limits processed foods.
- ✓ **Exercise**
Exercise at least 30 minutes per day five days per week. You can begin slowly and work your way up to 30 minutes if needed.
- ✓ **Lose Weight or Maintain Weight**
Losing 5 to 7 percent of your weight can reduce your risk for developing Type 2 diabetes significantly. Make lifestyle changes to lose weight gradually to lower your risk. If you already are at a healthy weight, maintain it.

Additional Resources:

- American Diabetes Association (ADA):** www.diabetes.org
- National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse (NDIC):** www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov
- Diabetic Lifestyle:** www.diabeticlifestyle.com
- NDSU Extension Service:** www.ag.ndsu.edu/food

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