

Adult Health Bulletin



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: PREDIABETES

Diabetes is a disease that affects the way a person's body handles blood sugar. The sugar is called glucose. Diabetes can last a lifetime and currently about 27 million people in the United States live with type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body makes insulin, a hormone that helps turn blood glucose into energy, but the insulin is not used by cells as it should be. Doctors usually call this insulin resistance. Because the insulin is not used as it should be, there is more sugar left in the blood.

If you have been told that you have prediabetes, it means that although you do not have a blood sugar level high enough to be considered diabetic, it is higher than the normal range. There are three different types of tests that can determine whether or not you are in a prediabetes stage:

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If you have prediabetes, you should not get worried, but you should take steps to lower your blood sugar levels.

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- **Fasting Plasma Glucose (FPG):** For 8 hours or more before a blood sugar level check you will not be able to have anything to eat or drink (other than water).

A good time to take this test is first thing in the morning before any breakfast or coffee. With this test, a normal level for blood sugar is less than 100. A prediabetes blood sugar range is 100 to 125. A diabetes diagnosis is made when the blood sugar level is higher than 126. It is important to remember that having a blood sugar level test only tells the glucose level at the time of the test.

- **A1C:** A doctor may want you to take an A1C test to know what your blood sugar levels look like over a longer period of time, such as 2 to 3 months. For the A1C, if the results come back between 5.7 percent and 6.4 percent, the test points to prediabetes. If your A1C is above 6.4 percent, it is a sign that you have diabetes. A person does not have to fast or avoid liquids before this test.
- **Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT):** This test takes about two hours and checks blood sugar levels at certain times. Usually a person would take a blood sugar level before the test and then again 2 hours after drinking a special type of drink. For this test a normal blood sugar level would be less than 140. A person with prediabetes would have a blood sugar level of 140 to 199 two hours after the drink. And a person with diabetes would have a blood sugar level of 200 or higher at the 2-hour mark.

If your healthcare provider has told you that you have prediabetes, you should not get too worried,

86 million Americans have prediabetes and are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

— National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey



Exercise can lower your risk of diabetes.

but you should take steps to lower your blood sugar levels.

How to lower your risk of getting diabetes

If you are diagnosed with prediabetes you should work on managing your blood sugar levels and perhaps even lowering them by:

- Increasing your physical activity (find an activity that you enjoy and do it)
- Eating more fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables and low-fat proteins
- Discussing with your doctor other steps you may need to take specific to your needs

If your healthcare provider has talked to you about prediabetes, make sure to continue the conversation the next time you meet. You may have some other tests or be asked to come in sooner than normal to keep checking on your blood sugar levels.

SOURCE:

American Diabetes Association (2015).
<http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/prediabetes>

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