

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

What Makes Me More Likely To Get Diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes runs in families. Also, a woman who has gestational diabetes during pregnancy is more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes. But heredity is not the whole story. Lifestyle choices can prevent or delay the disease.

What Can I Do To Reduce My Risk?

An overweight, unfit body uses insulin poorly. Lean muscle uses insulin better. Weight control and being more active make the body more sensitive to insulin.

The Diabetes Prevention Program found that persons who were overweight were able to reduce their risk of developing diabetes by 58 percent by losing about 7 percent of their body weight. Eating fewer calories and exercising about a half hour a day were more effective than was taking a medicine that made the body use insulin better.

You do not have to achieve your “ideal” body weight to reduce your risk. A weight loss of only 10–20 pounds may help. The trick is to keep the weight off through healthy eating and regular exercise.

More than one-third of the people who have diabetes do not know it. If you are at high risk, have your blood sugar tested every year. The symptoms of Type 2 diabetes are easily missed. Often they seem like the normal signs of aging. Finding diabetes early may prevent diabetic complications.

Common diabetes symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Skin infection
- Excess thirst or hunger
- Persistent or frequent vaginal or urinary tract infection

What Lifestyle Changes Can Help?

Changes in eating and exercise are never easy. But if you make one or two changes each month, you can achieve a whole new lifestyle in one year.

- Work up to 30 minutes or more of exercise 5–7 days a week.
- Eat five or more ½-cup servings of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Consume fewer high-fat and fried foods.
- Drink little or no alcohol.
- Switch to high-fiber breads and cereals.
- Eat only 2–3 ounces of meat, fish, or poultry at lunch or dinner.
- Use nonfat and low-fat dairy products.

- Drink lots of water instead of sugary drinks.
- Season food with fat-free broth, herbs, and spices instead of salt.
- Don't overeat at night. Space out your eating evenly throughout the day.
- Eat slowly and enjoy your food while sitting at a table.

My Goals for Prevention

Choose one or two lifestyle changes to work on this month. Start with changes that you think you can accomplish. Early success will help you work toward harder goals later.

My goals for this month are

1. _____

2. _____