



Diabetes Prevention Coaching

Understanding and Preventing Type 2 Diabetes



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The information presented here is not a substitute for medical advice. Please consult your health care professional about your medical conditions and history, and whether or not coaching is an appropriate program for you.

You will see links or references to resources available on the LifeWorks platform (login.lifeworks.com) throughout this booklet. To access these, you will need to log in with your username and password. If you do not know your login credentials, ask your health coach or your HR representative.

Written with the help of LifeWorks Health & Wellness Coaches:

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Reducing the Risk

Understanding and Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes, or you have been told that you're at risk of developing diabetes, it's important to know that lifestyle changes can significantly reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Making healthy food choices, losing weight, and engaging in regular physical activity can make all the difference.

All it takes is time, commitment, the support of others, and a willingness to be patient with yourself as you slowly replace old habits with new ones that will lead to a lifetime of better health.



Symptoms and risk factors

Perhaps you have not been diagnosed with prediabetes, but you have experienced common symptoms, such as:

- Frequent urination
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry—even though you're eating enough
- Extreme fatigue
- Cuts or bruises that are slow to heal
- Tingling, pain, or numbness in your hands or feet
- Changes in weight

These symptoms have been associated with prediabetes as well as with other health conditions. If you've experienced any of these symptoms, please see your health care professional.

Additional risk factors that can contribute to prediabetes or Type 2 diabetes include:

- Being overweight
- Fat stored primarily in your abdomen
- Inactivity
- Family history of type 2 diabetes
- Impaired glucose tolerance
- Race or ethnicity—Hispanics-Latino Americans, African Americans, American Indians, Pacific Islanders, and Asian Americans are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes
- Being over age 45
- Gestational diabetes
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease in which blood glucose levels are above normal. Most of the food we eat is turned into glucose, or sugar, for our bodies to use for energy. Your pancreas creates the hormone insulin, which allows your body to use sugar (glucose) from carbohydrates in the food that you eat for energy, or to store glucose for future use. Insulin helps keep your blood sugar level from getting too high or too low. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use its own insulin as well as it should. This causes sugar to build up in your blood.

Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes

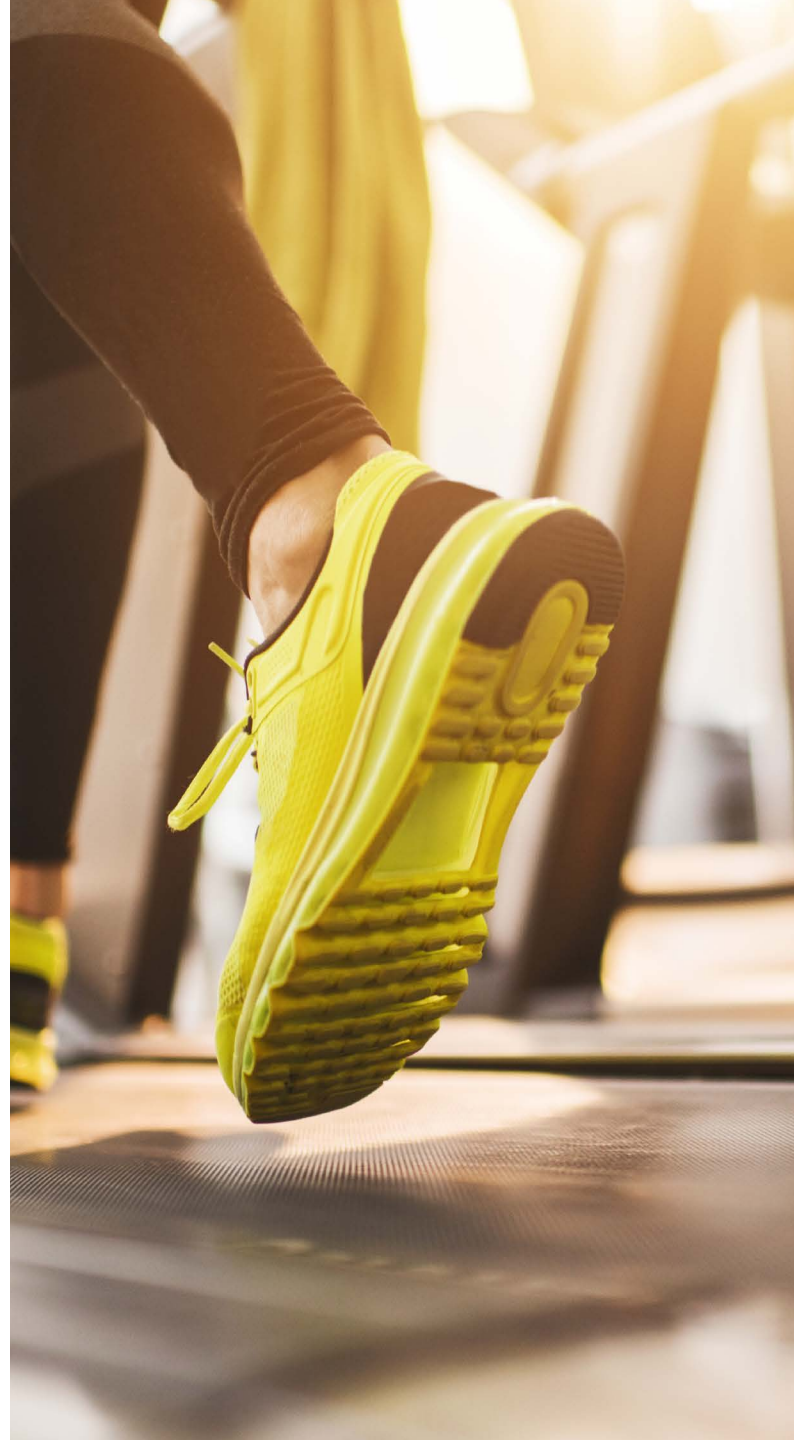
Type 1 diabetes, which used to be called insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM) or juvenile-onset diabetes, is an autoimmune disease usually diagnosed in childhood or early adulthood. With Type 1 diabetes, the body stops making its own insulin.

Type 2 diabetes used to be called non-insulin-dependent diabetes. With Type 2 diabetes, the body doesn't use insulin efficiently and eventually makes too little insulin.

According to recent research from the Centers for Disease Control, today, as more children and adolescents in the U.S. become overweight or obese and inactive, Type 2 diabetes is occurring more often in young people ages 10 and older.

Prediabetes

A person with prediabetes has a blood-sugar level higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. The person is at higher risk for developing Type 2 diabetes and other serious health problems, including heart disease and stroke. Without lifestyle changes—especially weight loss and regular physical activity—to improve their health, 15 to 30 percent of people with prediabetes will develop Type 2 diabetes.



Reducing the risk with lifestyle changes

If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes, it's important to learn ways to make healthy eating and regular physical activity part of your life. By doing this, you can significantly reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and its related health complications.

You can't make major lifestyle changes all at once. But with time, patience, commitment, and the support of others, you can take the steps that will lead you to better health.

Weight loss

People who are overweight are at higher risk of developing diabetes than people who are at a healthy weight. By becoming more aware of what you eat and when you eat it, and learning how to make healthier selections at the grocery and in restaurants, you will be taking important steps toward achieving a healthy weight.

Tracking what you eat

Using a food diary or tracker can help you be more aware of your eating patterns. Use a food tracker for a few days to help you identify what you eat, when you eat it, and why you eat it. Be sure to count everything and to pay attention to the number of servings that you're eating.

To track your food, you can use:

- The food diary at the end of this material
- Your calendar, phone, or a notebook

Understanding calories

Calories are a measurement tool, like inches or ounces. They measure the energy a food or beverage provides from the fat, carbohydrates, protein, and alcohol it contains. The following chart shows the approximate number of calories per gram in each of these sources.

Source	Calories (per gram)
Fat	9
Alcohol	7
Carbohydrates	4
Protein	4

To lose weight, you need to consume fewer calories than you use. You do this by becoming more active or by eating less. You lose even more by doing both.

Food triggers and habits

Situations that make you want food or drink are called “triggers.” Triggers include hunger, the sight or smell of food, social events, boredom, stress, sadness, and anger. For some people, certain routines, like watching TV or going to the movies, create the desire for food, even when they are not hungry. By becoming aware of your own food triggers, you can gain better control of your eating habits.

Emotional eating

If you reach for food when you’re not physically hungry or actually need nutrition, you’re eating emotionally. This kind of eating can become a habit that prevents us from learning how to deal with emotions in more constructive ways.

People who engage in emotional eating often follow it with something called “negative self-talk.” When we use food to soothe ourselves, the guilt, shame, and self-berating that may follow create their own damage, possibly leading to more eating and sometimes to eating disorders or depression. Emotional eating can become a vicious cycle of avoiding uncomfortable feelings, eating, and then having more negative emotions.

Grocery shopping

Planning is key for successful weight loss. Every week, make a menu plan that includes breakfasts, lunches, dinners, and snacks. This will help you shop deliberately. It will also help you avoid spur-of-the moment restaurant visits and take-out orders where you might overdo it.

- Make a shopping list. Check your kitchen for ingredients that you already have and make a list of items you’ll need. Then stick to the list.

- Don’t shop when you’re hungry. Hunger can lead to purchasing high-calorie foods and over-shopping in general.
- Schedule your shopping. Shop once or twice a week on a regular schedule. If you have to make a quick stop during the week for perishable items, buy only what you need and check out in the express lane.
- Shop the outside perimeter of the store. Fresh and healthy foods are usually found around the outside edge of the store. Include fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins in your weekly shopping trip.

Eating out

If you eat out often, these tips from the USDA will help you stick with your healthy eating plan:

- **Start your meal with a vegetable-packed salad.** Ask for the dressing to be served on the side and then use it only sparingly.
- **For a beverage, ask for water, unsweetened tea, or other drinks without added sugars.**
- **Choose main dishes that include vegetables,** such as stir fries or kabobs.
- **Order steamed, grilled, or broiled dishes** instead of those that are fried or sautéed. Ask for the sauce on the side.
- **Ask for whole-grain bread, whole-grain pasta, and brown rice** instead of the white versions, or ask to substitute an extra vegetable.

If the main portions at a restaurant are too large, try one of these strategies to keep from overeating:

- Order an appetizer-sized portion or a side dish instead of a main dish.
- Share a main dish with a friend.
- When your food is delivered, set aside or pack half of it to go immediately.
- When you've eaten enough, leave the rest or take it home.

Physical activity

Regular physical activity is important for good health. It helps to lower high blood pressure, strengthen bones and muscles, raise "good" cholesterol and lower "bad" cholesterol, reduce arthritis pain, and improve your mental health and mood.

Regular physical activity can reduce the risk for Type 2 diabetes by helping your body use insulin more effectively. For people who already have diabetes, regular exercise can lower the risk for heart disease and nerve damage.

How much physical activity is enough?

According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to reap the benefits of regular exercise, adults ages 18 to 64 need both aerobic and muscle-strengthening activity.

For aerobic exercise, adults need at least:

- 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) each week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity

or

- 1 hour and 15 minutes each week of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity (for example, jogging or running, swimming laps, singles tennis, or bike riding at 10 miles an hour or faster)

For muscle-strengthening exercise (for example, lifting weights or using resistance bands), adults should:

- Work all major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, and arms) two or more days each week.
- Repeat exercises for each muscle group 8 to 12 times per set. As the exercises become easier, increase the weight or do another set.

The Centers for Disease Control website offers a comprehensive set of videos that demonstrate aerobic exercise and weight-training exercise for all age groups.

Just go to [cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/videos/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/videos/index.htm)



Be sure to talk with your health care provider
before beginning a program of physical activity.

Staying on track

No matter how dedicated you are to changing your habits, if you're like most people, you will experience an occasional slip up. Don't be too hard on yourself. Remember, you're taking small steps toward lifetime change and better health.

- **Look forward, not backward.** If you have an eating set-back (that cheesecake just looked so good!), it's natural to be disappointed in yourself. Instead of giving up, start fresh the next day.
- **Get back in the saddle.** If you miss a workout, just be sure not to use missed sessions as an excuse to stop getting exercise. A good rule of thumb is to go no longer than two days without exercise. What's important is getting back on track.

Finding support

Making lifestyle changes is always easier when you have someone else with whom to share your efforts. There's a good chance that someone you know is trying to make the same kinds of changes you are, or has already successfully made the changes.

Let your friends, family, and co-workers know that you're looking for encouragement, support, and tips on how to stay healthy. Help can take the form of:

- Walking or working out together
- Taking turns bringing healthy snacks to work
- Sharing a set of arm weights or exercise bands at work to make strength-training easier
- Sharing recipes for healthy meals
- Providing encouragement if you've gotten off track

Keep in mind that your health coach will support you in setting and reaching healthy goals.

Other resources

LifeWorks, an EAP (employee assistance program and well-being resource), includes access to an online platform accessible by browser (login.lifeworks.com) or by mobile app for iOS or Android. The program that provided this article and delivers the health coaching in which you are participating offers this website with health information and tools:

Log in to the LifeWorks platform with your user credentials.

- The platform offers a wealth of well-being articles and tools, as well as information about all LifeWorks health & wellness coaching modules. If you're a LifeWorks Wellness client, you'll also have access to a variety of other helpful wellness solutions.

The program also provides a comprehensive online guide to making lifestyle changes that can help reduce your risk for diabetes through weight management strategies. The guide contains self-assessments, a food tracker, and expert advice on developing strategies to help you make healthy eating choices and build regular physical activity into your life.

The information relating to diabetes and prediabetes in this text is adapted from information sheets published at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [CDC.gov/diabetes](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes).

Food Diary: Day 1

Time	What I ate	How much I ate	How I felt <small>(worried, happy, angry, OK)</small>	Who I was with	Other things I tried to do instead of eating <small>(taking a walk, drinking water)</small>

Food Diary: Day 2

Time	What I ate	How much I ate	How I felt <small>(worried, happy, angry, OK)</small>	Who I was with	Other things I tried to do instead of eating <small>(taking a walk, drinking water)</small>

Food Diary: Day 3

Time	What I ate	How much I ate	How I felt <small>(worried, happy, angry, OK)</small>	Who I was with	Other things I tried to do instead of eating <small>(taking a walk, drinking water)</small>