

Make a plan to prevent diabetes, complications

November 3 2011

In observance of National Diabetes Month and World Diabetes Day on Nov. 14, the National Institutes of Health urges people to set goals and make plans to prevent diabetes and diabetes-related complications.

In support of this effort, the National [Diabetes](#) Education Program (NDEP), an initiative of the NIH and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), is providing tools and resources to help people find ways to deal with the [stress](#) that can prevent people from achieving their [health](#) goals — whether they have diabetes or are at risk for it.

In his proclamation recognizing National Diabetes Month, President Obama acknowledges the progress made in addressing the many challenges posed by diabetes, but cautions that despite these advances, the illness continues to rob thousands of Americans of health and life every year.

Nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes, and more than one-quarter of them do not know it. Left untreated, diabetes can lead to serious complications, such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness and amputation. An estimated 79 million adults have pre-diabetes, a condition that places them at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Making lifestyle changes — whether to manage or prevent diabetes — is not easy. Even if you know what to do to improve your health, figuring out how to do it and fitting it into your daily routine can be a big

challenge. Making changes in how you care for your health is a matter of trying and learning.

For example, people know that being physically active can help them lose weight. But do they know how to become more active and keep it up over time?

The NDEP offers the following tips for making a plan and taking small, but important steps to help you reach your goal:

- Think about what is important to you and your health.
- What changes are you willing and able to make?
- Decide what steps will help you reach your [health goals](#).
- Choose one goal to work on first. Start this week. Pick one change you can start to make immediately.
- Don't give up. It's common to run into some problems along the way. If things don't go as planned, think about other ways to reach your goal.

The NDEP provides videos, tips sheets, and other educational materials to help [people](#) make a plan to prevent type 2 diabetes and diabetes related complications. The NDEP's online library of behavior-change resources, Diabetes HealthSense, can be found at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/HealthSense.

Provided by NIH

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