

Type 2 diabetes reversible with lifestyle changes

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Type 2 diabetes can be reversed with lifestyle changes, according to European Society of Cardiology spokesperson Professor Eberhard Standl, from the Munich Diabetes Research Group in Germany. Today is World Diabetes Day and this year's theme is Healthy Living and Diabetes. People can calculate their risk using a simple questionnaire and find out if they need to take action.

Prof Standl said: "The dramatic increase of type 2 [diabetes](#) worldwide has exceeded expectations. Globally there are 400 million people with type 2 diabetes and a similar number with the pre stages of type 2 diabetes. The epidemic seems unstoppable but there is very good and strong evidence that people can stop diabetes with [lifestyle changes](#)."

People who are at high risk of diabetes can prevent it from developing. Equally, early on after type 2 diabetes develops it can be reversed to a pre stage. Both groups can be identified using a simple questionnaire that asks about age, body mass index, waist circumference, physical activity, consumption of fruits and vegetables, use of anti-hypertensive medications, history of [high blood glucose](#), and family history of type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

Prof Standl said: "The questionnaire is very easy and people can do it themselves. A score of 12 or higher indicates that you should take some preventive action. Regular physical exercise is the most important thing you can do, followed by eating fibre rich foods, limiting saturated fats and losing weight."

He continued: "Many people hardly move during their working day and even during leisure time. To reverse or prevent type 2 diabetes, the goal is 30 minutes of decent physical exercise every day. This could be brisk walking, jogging, swimming or cycling and should be combined with muscle training."

Fibre rich nutrition in the form of whole grains is another way to reverse or prevent type 2 diabetes. Fibre delays the digestion and absorption of many foods and helps the gut to get enough of what's called the incretin effect, where insulin levels increase and cause [blood glucose](#) to go down. Prof Standl explained: "When you eat fibre, you get more time and more power to dispose of all the carbohydrates."

People who want to reverse early diabetes into a pre stage of diabetes, or prevent type 2 diabetes from developing, need to lose about 5% of their body weight.

"To lose weight you have to limit your fat intake, particularly saturated fats, which are found in foods such as butter, sausages, fatty cuts of meat, cakes and cheese," said Prof Standl. "There is no question that people who have had type 2 diabetes for just a short period of time can reverse it with a low calorie diet. This can be effective within 3 to 5 days. Of course the continuing challenge is to maintain the lower body weight."

Prof Standl concluded: "Adopting lifestyle changes that prevent or reverse [type 2 diabetes](#) in the short term can also prevent death from cardiovascular disease over the long term.³ If you take the questionnaire and find out you're at risk of diabetes, it's not too late. Making positive changes by being more active, eating a healthy diet and losing weight can reverse diabetes and are also good for your heart."

More information: "ESC Guidelines on diabetes, pre-diabetes, and

cardiovascular diseases developed in collaboration with the EASD." [dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehs1083035-3087](https://doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehs1083035-3087) First published online: 31 August 2013 eurheartj.oxfordjournals.org/content/34/39/3035

FINDRISC questionnaire for estimating risk of diabetes and measuring BMI here: [www.escardio.org/about/press/D ... -risk-chart-2014.pdf](http://www.escardio.org/about/press/D...-risk-chart-2014.pdf)

Provided by European Society of Cardiology

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