

How to know if you're prediabetic

June 8 2015, by Mallory Powell And Laura Dawahare

Before type 2 diabetes develops, there is almost always a period of prediabetes where blood sugar levels are in a "gray area" above normal but below diabetic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one in three American adults are prediabetic, but only around 11 percent of those people are aware of their condition.

Prediabetes is a serious concern because many of the diabetic disease processes – including nerve damage, eye problems and [heart disease](#) – have already begun in the body even though diabetes hasn't been diagnosed yet. Without intervention, there is a high likelihood that prediabetes will progress to diabetes within three to 10 years. People with prediabetes are also at 50 percent higher risk for heart disease and stroke.

Risk factors

Prediabetes often has no obvious symptoms and can occur regardless of age, so it's very important that you know and monitor your glucose numbers (and your children's glucose numbers). This is especially true if you have any of the following [risk factors](#) for diabetes:

- Overweight or obese
- Central fat distribution around the abdomen (sometimes called an "apple" shape)
- History of gestational diabetes
- Family history of diabetes
- Symptoms of diabetes, including increased thirst, frequent

- urination, fatigue and blurred vision
- History of elevated blood sugar levels

What can I do to prevent prediabetes from progressing?

If you are prediabetic, you can make lifestyle changes to prevent progression to diabetes and also reduce your risk for other health problems like heart disease, stroke, high cholesterol and [high blood pressure](#). Research has shown that [weight loss](#), healthy eating and increased physical activity can often return [blood sugar levels](#) to a healthy range. Try to make changes that you can sustain, and consult your [health care provider](#) for guidance.

- Weight loss: Even if you don't reach your "ideal" weight, losing just 10 to 20 pounds can reduce the likelihood that you will progress to diabetes.
- Healthy diet: Choose foods that are low in saturated fat and calories and high in fiber, like vegetables, fruits and whole grains.
- Exercise: Incorporate 30 to 60 minutes of [moderate physical activity](#) most days of the week. You can also break up your exercising into shorter segments throughout the day.
- Sleep: Research suggests that getting at least six hours of sleep each night can help to reduce insulin resistance. If your sleep is disturbed by loud snoring or waking up gasping for air, you might be experiencing sleep apnea, a serious health condition that can worsen prediabetes.
- Medications: Some diabetes medications are prescribed to patients with prediabetes to prevent the condition from progressing.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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