

A 3-pronged plan to cut type 2 diabetes risk

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(HealthDay)—The type 2 diabetes tide remains unchecked in the United States, as does pre-diabetes—having a blood sugar level higher than normal, but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis.

A U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report found that about 30 million Americans—roughly 10 percent of the population—have type 2 diabetes. What's more, over 80 million have pre-diabetes, which, if not treated, often leads to diabetes within five years.

That puts these people at risk of heart and [blood vessel disease](#), [nerve damage](#), and kidney and eye damage, among other health threats.

While type 2 diabetes is more common among certain ethnic and racial groups—including American Indians, Alaska Natives, African Americans and people of Hispanic descent—no one is immune. And though you can't change your heritage, you can change diabetes risk factors like carrying too much weight and being sedentary.

A multi-year U.S. National Institutes of Health study of more than 3,000 overweight or obese adults with blood sugar at pre-diabetes levels found that lifestyle changes can have a profound effect. Achieving a 7 percent weight loss and doing 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity every week lowered the rate of type 2 diabetes by 58 percent, compared to people who didn't make these changes.

What you eat counts, too. Focusing on fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy cuts type 2 diabetes risk. By contrast, eating a lot of refined grains (like baked goods made with white flour and white rice), processed meats and added sugars increases it. So aim to rebalance your diet.

Finally, rethink your drink. One very simple step is to cut out sugar-sweetened beverages. Sodas and similar drinks may lead not only to type 2 diabetes, but also to overweight and more belly fat in particular.

More information: With the aim of cutting the number of new cases of type 2 diabetes in half, the CDC created the [National Diabetes](#)

[Prevention Program](#), with all the essentials you need to protect yourself and your loved ones.

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