

# DIABETES PREVENTION

## FACT SHEET

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic disease in the country.*

*One of every five health care dollars is now spent on diabetic care.*

*The number of Americans with diabetes has more than tripled since 1980.*

*One in three U.S. adults could have diabetes by 2050 if current trends continue.*



### This is a fight we can't afford to lose...

When you eat, your body breaks food down into glucose (sugar) and sends it into the bloodstream. Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, helps move the glucose from the bloodstream into the cells to be used for energy. When your cells no longer respond well to insulin, the sugar in the bloodstream stays abnormally high. This is the beginning of diabetes. Untreated high blood glucose can cause problems such as nerve damage, kidney or eye disease, heart disease, and stroke. At present, type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented. **Type 2 diabetes, however, can be prevented in many cases** by maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

**Are you at risk for diabetes? Should you be concerned? Consider the following questions:**

1. Are you over 40? If so, you are at an increased risk for type 2 diabetes.
2. Are you male? Men are more likely to have undiagnosed diabetes.
3. Do you have a strong family history of diabetes? If so, you are at higher risk for the disease.
4. Are you Asian, Black, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, or Native American? If so, you are also at increased risk.
5. Do you have high blood pressure? People with high blood pressure are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes.
6. Are you physically active? If not, you are in a higher risk group.
7. What is your BMI or Body Mass Index? This is a measure that compares your weight to your height. If you have a BMI higher than 25.0, you are overweight and at higher risk for type 2 diabetes. To calculate your BMI manually, take your height in inches and square the number. In other words, multiply the number of inches by the same number of inches. Next, divide your weight in pounds by this figure. Multiply that answer by the conversion factor of 703 if you used inches and pounds. This is your BMI. If you want to use a calculator online, go to [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org) and put "BMI" into the search engine.

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If you answered “yes” to one or more of the questions above, read below how you can reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes by focusing on three key areas: **1) Eating Right, 2) Physical Activity, 3) Weight Control.**

## Start the Fight by Eating Right!!!

**Eating well to maintain a healthy weight is one of the most important things you can do to lower your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and heart disease.**

### Build a Healthier Plate:

Use a grocery list when shopping for food to help you choose more fresh vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Instead of stressing out on what you are trying not to eat, focus on the foods you need to eat more. Go to [Mypyramid.gov](http://Mypyramid.gov) and find out how many servings of veggies, fruits, and whole grains you need each day. Then work to reach those goals. You’ll be so busy (and full) focusing on the positives, that you won’t even miss that hot fudge sundae.



Buy leaner meats (such as chicken, turkey, and lean cuts of pork or beef) and lower fat dairy products (like skim milk and yogurt). Buy whole grain breads and cereals. Save money by **not buying** sodas, sweets, and chips. If they aren’t in your home, you’ll be less likely to eat them.

Never shop when you are hungry.

Allow only ¼ of your plate to be carb rich food at each meal. Eating 1/3 to 1/2 the plate as non-starchy vegetables is also recommended.

### Eat Smart:

To cut down on sodium in canned vegetables, drain and rinse them before heating them in fresh water. You can do the same to cut down on added sugar in canned fruits. It’s best to buy fresh fruits and veggies, but canned is better than nothing at all.

Try starting a meal with a salad. This helps you eat more veggies and fills you up before you get to higher calorie courses.

Make healthy snack foods easy to find in your kitchen. Put fresh carrots, grapes, or pretzels out instead of chips. Grill, boil, or bake foods instead of frying them. Forget the French fries. No, really, forget the French fries.

Reduce or eliminate soft drinks.

## MOVE, MOVE, MOVE!!!

### What Can Physical Activity do for You?

It helps to keep your blood glucose, blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides on target. It lowers your risk of diabetes, stroke, and heart attack.

It relieves stress.

It strengthens your heart, muscles, and bones and keeps your joints flexible and less prone to injury.

It elevates your mood and reduces the risk of depression.



### What Kinds of Physical Activity Are Best?

A complete physical activity routine includes four elements:

1. Activity – walking, using the stairs, moving around – throughout the day
2. Aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, swimming, or biking.
3. Strength Training – like lifting weights.
4. Flexibility Training – like stretching.

**Aim for 30 minutes a day** of aerobic exercise, at least five days a week. Start out with five minutes a day and work your way up. Be creative. Put away the leaf blower and use a broom or rake. Take a brisk walk at home, outside, or in the mall. Ride a bike. **You have to move to be healthy**, so turn off the television, the computer, and the cell phone and find something aerobic to do each day.

Strength training helps build strong muscles and allows you to burn more calories, even when you are standing still. This helps with weight control and normalizes blood sugar. Try to do strength training two to three times a week.

**Lift light weights at home.**

**Join a fitness class.**

**Use resistance bands that can be placed on door knobs or table legs.**

Flexibility exercises, also called stretching, help keep your joints limber and lower your chances of injury. Gentle stretching for 5 to 10 minutes before aerobic or weight training exercises is recommended.

Set realistic, achievable goals. Don’t try to do too much all at once. Consult your doctor.

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## Lose to Win!!!

### Your Weight and Your Risk

**Being overweight raises your risk for type 2 diabetes.** But losing weight, even losing 10-15 pounds, can make a big difference. Weight loss can be hard because it means making changes in the way you eat and in your physical activity. Losing weight also takes time – and that can be frustrating. The good news is that you can lose weight and keep it off, even if you've never done it before.



### Here's What Works for People Who Have Lost Weight and Kept it off:

1. Cut back on calories and fat
2. You must become more physically active
3. Eat breakfast every day
4. Keep a record of what you eat and your level of activity.

Most people find that it is easier to take small steps instead of doing everything at once. Set realistic goals within a timeframe that works for you.

### Your Support System:

Many people find it helpful to meet, online or in person, with people who are also trying to lose weight. Think about joining a group for weight loss, exercise, or general support. Or create your own support system by talking to friends and family about your successes and struggles. You may be surprised at how supportive they will be.

*Portions of this Fact Sheet have been taken from the following sources:*

1. *The ADA website [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org).*
2. *CDC.gov.*