

Understanding Prediabetes

Prediabetes means the amount of glucose, a form of sugar, in your blood is higher than normal, but not high enough for you to have Type 2 Diabetes. Yet.

Even though you have Prediabetes you may feel fine and have no symptoms. However, long-term damage to your body, including your heart may already be taking place. Your risk of heart attack, stroke, circulation problems, kidney disease, eye disease, nerve disease, and amputation, and other health issues like erectile dysfunction are all increasing.

That's because Prediabetes means the cells of your body no longer react easily to a hormone called Insulin. Insulin works like a key to open your cells and let glucose enter. Your body uses the glucose for energy now or stores it for later use. But when you have prediabetes you are insulin resistant - your cells don't respond as well to insulin and begin to let less glucose in. With nowhere to go, the glucose stays in your bloodstream, traveling all around your body causing problems along the way.

To help, your body begins to produce more insulin hoping to get the glucose out of your bloodstream and into the cells. But even with the extra insulin, without changes, insulin resistance continues to increase and eventually your body can't keep up the pace. It burns out and starts producing less and less insulin leading to Type 2 diabetes and many serious health problems.

There are many reasons why you may develop Prediabetes. Family history, ethnicity and age play a part. In fact, you begin to have a greater risk for Prediabetes by age 35 and that risk increases even more after age 65. The more fat you carry, especially around your abdomen or stomach area, the more resistant your cells become to insulin. And as you get older, it gets harder and harder to keep the weight off, further increasing your chances of prediabetes.

A major study called The Diabetes Prevention Program found that the risk of Type 2 Diabetes can be reduced by as much as 58% by making healthier food choices and increasing activity levels. In the study, people who lost 5-10% of their body weight by making healthy food choices and exercising 150 minutes a week were the most successful at improving their blood glucose levels and preventing Type 2 Diabetes.

So begin to make lifestyle changes to lose weight. Start by making healthy food choices. Glucose comes from the foods you eat, so take a look at your eating habits and make some changes. Regular physical exercise will help you lose weight. It also helps your body use the glucose for energy to reduce the overall amount in your blood.

Even for people at a healthy weight exercise can help keep prediabetes at bay so make physical activity a regular part of your routine. Lifestyle changes like these are the best ways to reduce insulin resistance and in turn reduce your risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes and all the complications that come with it in the future.

Work with your healthcare provider to monitor your blood glucose level and get feedback on your progress. You may also be prescribed a medication to further control your blood glucose level.

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Prediabetes means you have too much glucose in your blood. If you don't make changes now – if you don't change the way you eat, if you don't increase the amount you exercise, if you don't lose weight – it will get harder and harder for your body to use insulin. Instead, take control now. If you make healthy changes you can delay or prevent Type 2 diabetes from developing. And the longer you prevent that, the better your overall health, now and in the future.