



## pre-diabetes

### Pre-diabetes: At a Glance

#### What is pre-diabetes?

Pre-diabetes means that your fasting plasma glucose (sugar) level is higher than normal but not quite high enough for you to be diagnosed with diabetes. It does mean that you are at a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes sometime in the future. The American Diabetes Association estimates that there are about 54 million people in the United States with pre-diabetes and that the incidence in children and adolescents is also rising.

#### How is pre-diabetes diagnosed?

Pre-diabetes is diagnosed by doing a blood test. You may have a test for blood glucose (sugar) done in the morning before you eat or drink; this is called fasting blood glucose. If the fasting plasma blood glucose test is used, a blood glucose between 100 mg/dl and 125 mg/dl would indicate pre-diabetes, also known as impaired fasting glucose (IFG). You may have a test that takes a little longer and requires you to drink a sweet liquid and then have a blood glucose test done; this is called an oral glucose tolerance test. If the oral glucose tolerance test is used, a blood glucose of 140 mg/dl to 199 mg/dl two hours after drinking the liquid would indicate pre-diabetes, also called impaired glucose tolerance. An impaired glucose tolerance result of >200 mg/dL is diabetes. Your health care provider will determine which test is right for you. The normal value for a fasting plasma glucose is under 100 mg/dl and a value of 126 mg/dl or over is considered diabetes.

#### Is pre-diabetes the same as borderline diabetes or “a touch of sugar”?

There are clearly defined numbers today to determine if your fasting blood glucose is normal or if you have *pre-diabetes* or *diabetes*. The terms borderline or “touch of sugar” are very general and don't really have a specific meaning. These terms are being used less frequently and are truly incorrect in their description. The term pre-diabetes more clearly states that your blood glucose is higher than normal and that you are at risk for developing diabetes.

#### What causes pre-diabetes?

Pre-diabetes can be caused by a number of factors. The risk factors for pre-diabetes are the same as the risk factors for type 2 diabetes: age, being overweight, inactivity, a parent or sibling with diabetes, a history of gestational diabetes (diabetes of pregnancy) or having had a baby over 9 lbs. at birth. If you are an African American, Native American, Asian American, Pacific Islander or Latino/Hispanic, you also have a higher risk of developing pre-diabetes or diabetes.

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### Pre-diabetes

When your blood glucose (sugar) rises, for instance after you eat, an organ called the pancreas senses the rise in the blood glucose. Special cells in the pancreas release a hormone called insulin. The insulin travels to the bloodstream and helps the excess glucose in the blood enter the cells where it is used to produce energy. Sometimes the body can't utilize the insulin effectively and not enough of the glucose gets transferred into the cells, so the level of glucose in the blood rises. This is called insulin resistance. In many people with pre-diabetes, the pancreas is not able to produce enough insulin to overcome this resistance. Your liver could also be overproducing glucose causing higher blood glucose levels.

### Preventing Diabetes

Research has shown that preventing or delaying the progression from pre-diabetes to diabetes is possible. A major study called the Diabetes Prevention Program proved that type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed by making lifestyle changes, specifically developing healthier eating patterns and becoming more active. This study showed that 30 minutes of physical activity a day along with a loss of 5 - 10% of total body weight prevented the progression to diabetes by 58%. For a person who weighs 200 pounds, a weight loss of 10 to 20 pounds can make a difference! Although taking medication for pre-diabetes can help prevent the progression to diabetes, the study showed that weight loss, diet and exercise actually

worked better. Weight loss will also help lower abnormal lipid levels, such as cholesterol, that are frequently seen in people with pre-diabetes.

### Set Goals, Start Small and Build

Start by looking at what you are currently doing. What and how often are you eating? Are you physically active, do you spend a lot of time sitting and watching television, playing video games or using a computer for long periods of time? Next, think about some small changes that you can make such as making healthier food choices, eating more fruits and vegetables and cutting down on the amount of snack foods that you eat. What about activity? Spend less time on screen activities such as television and computer, move around more, take stairs instead of elevators, and try 2 or 3 short walks a day. Start small and gradually build on your successes. Invite a friend or family member to join in. Every positive change that you make, no matter how small it seems, can have an impact on your health and your future. Set small daily or weekly goals for yourself. Don't start with, "I will walk 2 miles every day this week" if you haven't been walking before. Instead, start with, "I'll walk 10 minutes a day at least 3 days this week". Set goals for the amount of screen time you'll allow yourself each day or how many servings of fruits or vegetables you'll try to include in your diet. When you've had success at reaching a goal, set a new goal or build on previous ones. Before you know it you'll be doing more than you thought possible!



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