



# Type 2 Diabetes Prevention



Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease without known prevention. Type 2 diabetes, however, can be prevented or delayed through proven, achievable, healthy lifestyle habits. By making healthy lifestyle changes, you lower your risk of diabetes and other disease. Not to mention, you'll feel better and have more energy.



## Healthy lifestyle habits



### Weight control

Weight control is an integral part of diabetes prevention. You may be able to prevent or delay diabetes by losing 5% to 10% of your current weight. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds, your goal would be to lose between 10 and 20 pounds.



### Eat healthy

It is essential to reduce your calorie intake to lose weight and keep it off. Try smaller portion sizes and limit your fat and sugar intake. It also helps to eat a variety of foods from each food group, including plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Limiting red meat and avoiding processed meats can also help prevent Type 2 diabetes.<sup>1</sup>



### Exercise regularly

Exercise has many health benefits. It can help you lose weight, lower your blood sugar levels, and reduce your risk of Type 2 diabetes.<sup>2</sup> Try getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week. If you're just getting started with physical exercise, talk with your health care professional to determine which types of exercise are best for you.<sup>3</sup> You can start slowly and work up to a bigger goal.



### Don't smoke

Smoking can contribute to insulin resistance, leading to Type 2 diabetes. If you currently smoke, consider smoking cessation plans to quit.<sup>4</sup>



### Talk to your doctor

Check with your health care provider to understand if there is anything else you can do to delay or prevent Type 2 diabetes. If you are at high risk, your provider may suggest you take one of a few types of diabetes medications.<sup>5</sup>



## Development of Type 2 diabetes symptoms

Extreme  
hunger

Increased  
thirst

Frequent  
urination

Fatigue

Blurred  
vision

Unexplained  
weight loss

Irritability

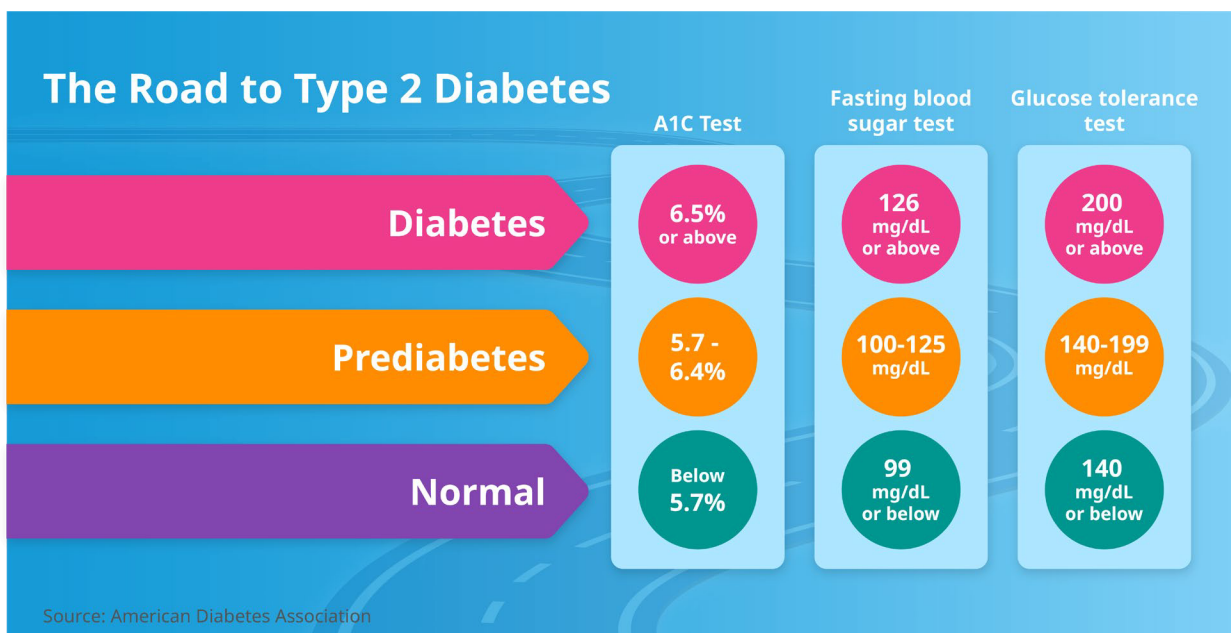
Unmanaged Type 2 diabetes increases the risk of many comorbidities. It can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, nerve damage, vision impairment, and foot ulcers that require amputation.<sup>6,7</sup>



## Should you get tested?

Prediabetes doesn't have symptoms and can be diagnosed through a blood test. Consult your health care provider regarding your need for testing. While people with diabetes regularly test their blood sugar levels at home, it is best to have a health care provider administer your test and analyze your results.

At-home testing can give conflicting results depending on when and how you take your test. This chart, created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, outlines indicators for normal, prediabetes, and diabetes fasting blood sugar levels.



## Educational Resources

If you would like to continue your education on diabetes, these organizations have reliable and simple to read resources available:

- [American Diabetes Association](#)
- [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [International Diabetes Federation](#)

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## Healthy living with diabetes



When you implement healthy choices to help manage your diabetes, you can be better positioned to live a happy, healthy life. While there are many challenges associated with the disease, diabetes can be managed through medication, treatment adherence, and a balance of lifestyle modifications to your diet and physical activity levels. It's essential to take a comprehensive approach to living a healthy life with diabetes. Let's review various aspects that affect how well you live with diabetes.



### Nutrition

Eating a well-balanced diet is necessary to keep blood glucose levels stable. Prioritize foods with a low glycemic index, such as green vegetables, 100% whole grains, and beans like chickpeas, kidney beans, and lentils. Consuming low-glycemic foods can be the most effective way to manage blood glucose levels.

1  
Non-starchy  
vegetables

2  
Protein foods

3  
Carbohydrate  
foods

4  
Water or  
0-calorie drink

### Management of emotional eating

Emotions can influence what, when, and how much we eat. It's common for people to "stress eat" or eat to preoccupy themselves when they're bored or experience other forms of mental or emotional distress. However, eating to manage your feelings can hinder your weight loss or maintenance efforts. Monitor your emotions regularly and ask yourself if you want food because you are hungry or looking to fill an emotional need. Here are some other exercises to help you manage emotional eating.



Reflect on what emotions and situations trigger you to eat.



Write a list of other actions to fulfill your emotional need instead. For example, call a friend, walk, or do quick stretching and deep breathing exercises.



Assess your physical hunger cues to see if you are experiencing actual hunger.



Track the foods you eat, when you eat them, how hungry you felt then, and the emotions you experienced, if any.



Involve family members and friends to support you and keep you accountable on your weight loss or maintenance journey.

Try online tools or apps to track your habits and simplify healthy meal planning. [The Diabetes Food Hub](#) is a free tool that offers nutrition tips, recipes, meal planners, and a grocery list feature to assist with shopping.<sup>1</sup>



## Weight loss for a high body mass index (BMI)

Weight loss can significantly impact diabetes if you have a high BMI. For those with prediabetes, weight loss has been proven to delay the onset or decrease the risk of Type 2 diabetes. For those with Type 2 diabetes, weight loss may improve glycemic control and help reverse the progression of the disease. An effective weight-loss approach for most people is consuming healthy foods, practicing portion control, and increasing physical activity. Weight loss is challenging because it requires consistency around eating and exercise habits. Be gentle with yourself throughout your weight loss journey and celebrate small milestones.



## Physical activity

A realistic exercise plan is an essential first step toward becoming more active on a routine basis. Light walking is a suitable place to start if you are not used to regular exercise. Distract yourself, if you need to, by walking with a friend or listening to music or an audiobook. Set goals every day or every week and work toward increasing them. For example, start with 5,000 steps daily and then increase by 3,000 steps weekly.

Soon enough, you will feel in control of your body and health habits. The American Diabetes Association offers advice on SMART exercise plan goal setting.<sup>2</sup> Remember to consult your health care provider before beginning an exercise routine.



## Mental health

When first diagnosed with diabetes, denial and confusion can be natural. It's common to feel a sense of "not me," "I don't believe it," or "there must be some mistake." You might be in denial if you catch yourself saying or thinking this. However, at some point, it's essential to accept your diagnosis and take action to manage it. Otherwise, you run the risk of your health declining or other complications that might make treating your condition more complicated.

Often, after denial comes sadness or even depression regarding your diagnosis. Depression is a widespread and severe mental health condition, but it is treatable. Here's a list of signs of depression. If you experience these symptoms for two or more weeks, contact your health care provider immediately.

- ✓ Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- ✓ Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- ✓ Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies
- ✓ Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- ✓ Appetite and weight changes
- ✓ Physical pains and aches that do not have a clear cause and do not ease with treatment
- ✓ Thoughts of death or suicide
- ✓ Decreased energy or fatigue
- ✓ Moving or talking more slowly
- ✓ Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

## For more information regarding mental health, check out these resources:

- [The Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#) provides additional information and depression treatment resources.
- [Empower](#) provides free, confidential counseling through text messaging.
- The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) provides 24/7 free, confidential support to those in crisis.
- The [World Health Organization](#) offers many resources on the topic of mental health. Their website contains more information on stress management, depression, mental health during COVID-19, and more.
- You may also refer to relevant benefit plan documents to learn about behavioral health coverage or benefits available through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) from your employer.



## Financial management

Living with a chronic disease like diabetes isn't just physically or mentally taxing. It can also strain your finances due to doctor visits, medications, or indirect expenses of being unable to work. Here are resources to help you save money on the cost of care:



Use [Good Rx](#) to save up to 80% on your prescriptions. Drug prices vary by pharmacy. Good Rx will find savings and compare prices between significant pharmacies in the United States.<sup>3</sup>



Good Rx also offers tips on how to save money on insulin through their cost comparison guide.<sup>4</sup> Medication discounts, copay cards, and patient assistance programs are a few methods that can make these medications more affordable.



There's help if you struggle to pay for insulin or diabetes medication. Four insulin manufacturers offer immediate assistance and [long-term resources](#). Find out who manufactures your drug by checking the company logo on your insulin vial or pen and calling them directly.



## Diabetes management programs

Various condition management programs are available to help you manage your diabetes and live more fully. Often, diabetes occurs alongside other comorbid conditions, such as hypertension, obesity, hyperlipidemia, or cardiovascular disease. Refer to your employer's benefit documents to learn about the availability of a diabetes management program.

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