PREVENTING DIABETES

What Is Prediabetes?
People with blood glucose levels that are slightly elevated have “prediabetes.” This condition is sometimes called impaired fasting glucose (IFG) or impaired glucose tolerance (IGT), depending on the test used to diagnose it. This condition usually has no symptoms, so you may have prediabetes for several years without knowing it.

However, if you have prediabetes, you have a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Studies have shown that most people with prediabetes go on to develop type 2 diabetes within 10 years. People with prediabetes also have a higher risk of heart disease.

Not everyone with prediabetes will develop diabetes. If you have prediabetes, you can and should do something about it. Weight loss, modest changes in diet, and increased physical activity can prevent or delay diabetes and may return blood glucose levels to normal.

When Should I Be Tested for Diabetes?
Anyone aged 45 years or older should be tested for diabetes, especially if you are overweight. If you are younger than 45, but are overweight, have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, or have known risk factors for developing diabetes, you should consider being tested. If your blood glucose is higher than normal (in the range of prediabetes), have your blood glucose test repeated in 1 to 2 years.
What Are the Risk Factors for Developing Diabetes?

» Overweight or obesity
» High blood pressure measuring 140/90 or higher
» High cholesterol
» A parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
» African American, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, or Hispanic American/Latino heritage
» Prior history of diabetes during pregnancy
» Birth of at least one baby weighing more than 9 pounds
» Physical inactivity—exercising less than 3 times a week

How Does Body Weight Affect the Likelihood of Developing Diabetes?

Being overweight or obese is a leading cause of type 2 diabetes. Being overweight can keep your body from making and using insulin properly. It can also cause high blood pressure. Studies show that a moderate diet and exercise of about 30 minutes or more, 5 or more days per week, result in a weight loss that can delay and possibly prevent type 2 diabetes.

EAT HEALTHY

» Eat fewer calories
» Eat smaller portions and use a smaller plate
» Eat foods that are low in fat, cholesterol, salt, and sugar
» Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
» Eat more lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, or eggs
» Try to eat meals and snacks at regular times
» Take your time when you eat
» Limit alcohol intake
» Choose foods that are grilled or baked, not fried
» For dessert, eat a piece of fruit or sugar-free ice cream
» Drink lots of water instead of soda, sugared drinks, or fruit juice
» Avoid going shopping when you are hungry
» Read and compare food labels when shopping
» Stay away from “all-you-can-eat restaurants” or buffets

MOVE MORE

» Talk with your provider about what exercises would be safe for you
» Make a plan to increase your regular physical activity
» Start off by taking a 5-minute walk
» Slowly, add more time until you reach 30 minutes, 5 days a week
» When shopping or driving to work, park a little further away from the entrance
» If it is safe, get off the bus a stop or two before your work place or home and walk the rest of the way
» While watching TV, walk or dance around the room, march in place, or do some sit-ups and leg lifts
» Take a walk during lunch time
» Deliver a message in person instead of sending an e-mail
» Take the stairs instead of the elevator to your office
» Try using a pedometer that counts the number of steps you take