



## Prediabetes

### **What is diabetes?**

Your body changes most of the food you eat into glucose (a form of sugar). Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that allows glucose to enter all the cells of your body and be used as energy.

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when a person's body doesn't make enough insulin or can't use insulin properly. When you have diabetes, the sugar builds up in your blood instead of moving into the cells. Too much sugar in the blood can lead to serious health problems, including heart disease and damage to the nerves and kidneys.

There are 2 types of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't produce any insulin. In type 2 diabetes, the body either doesn't produce enough insulin or the cells ignore the insulin. Between 90-95% of people who are diagnosed with diabetes have type 2 diabetes.

### **What is prediabetes?**

Before people develop type 2 diabetes, they usually have prediabetes. In people who have prediabetes, blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to say they have diabetes. Normal blood sugar is between 70 and 99 mg per dL. Blood sugar between 100 and 125 mg per dL suggests prediabetes. Blood sugar higher than 126 mg per dL is considered diabetes. People who have prediabetes have a high risk of eventually developing diabetes.

### **How can my doctor tell if I have prediabetes?**

Your doctor can give you a blood test to check for prediabetes.

### **Who is at risk?**

You are at risk for prediabetes if any of the following are true:

- You are overweight or obese.
- You have a parent, brother or sister who has diabetes.
- You had diabetes during pregnancy (called gestational diabetes) or had a baby who weighed more than 9 pounds at birth.

- You belong to any of the following ethnic groups: African American, Native American, Latin American or Asian/Pacific Islander.
- You have high blood pressure (above 140/90 mm Hg).
- Your high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol level (“good” cholesterol) is less than 40 mg per dL (for men) or less than 50 mg per dl (for women), or your triglyceride level is higher than 250 mg per dL.
- You are a woman who has polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).

### **If I have prediabetes, can I avoid developing diabetes?**

You can lower your risk of developing diabetes by making changes in your lifestyle. If you are overweight, losing weight can help. Losing weight also helps lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Exercise is also important. Your exercise routine should include 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (such as brisk walking or swimming) at least five times a week. Ask your doctor what exercise level is safe for you.

You need to follow a healthy diet. Eat foods such as salads, vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fish, beans, poultry and other meats. Don't eat a lot of sugar, honey or molasses. Eat foods made with whole grains instead of white flour.

Less than 30 percent of your total daily calories should come from fat. Less than 10 percent of your daily calories should come from saturated fat. Carbohydrates should make up 50 to 60 percent of your total daily calories. Your diet also should include at least 38 grams of fiber per day for men age 50 and younger and 25 grams per day for women age 50 and younger.

Your doctor might refer you to a dietitian or diabetes educator to help you change your eating habits.

### **Can medicine help prevent or delay diabetes?**

Diabetes medicines are not as effective as diet and exercise. However, your doctor might prescribe medicine if you are at high risk for diabetes and have other medical problems, such as obesity, a high triglyceride level, a low HDL cholesterol level or high blood pressure.