

Five Small Steps to Prevent Diabetes



Persons age 45 or older and overweight are at increased risk for pre-diabetes. However, research has shown that those at risk for diabetes can delay or prevent the onset of the disease by losing five to seven percent of their body weight through a low-fat, low-calorie eating plan and increased physical activity.

Here are five small steps that you can take today to start living a healthier life.

1. Find out if you are at risk

The first step is to find out if you are at risk for diabetes or if you have pre-diabetes. Talk with your health care provider at your next visit.

2. Set realistic goals

You don't have to knock yourself out to delay or prevent diabetes. Start by taking small manageable steps. For instance, try to get 15 minutes of physical exercise a day this week. Add an additional five minutes per week until building up the recommended 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

3. Make healthier food choices

Reduce the amount of fat in your diet. Try to eat more fruits and vegetables, beans and grains. Choose grilled or baked foods instead of fried foods.

4. Record your progress

Write down everything you eat and drink. Keeping a food diary is one of the most effective ways to lose weight and keep it off. Review this diary with your health care provider.

5. Keep at it

Making even modest changes can be tough in the beginning. Try adding one new healthy lifestyle change a week. Always get back on track, even if you fall off a few times. The key is to just keep at it.

Resource: National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP)

Want to reduce calories?

Here are some tips to help cut down on daily calories while making healthy food choices.

- Keep meat, poultry and fish servings to about 3 ounces (about the size of a deck of cards).
- Try not to snack while cooking or cleaning the kitchen.
- Make sure to eat breakfast every day.
- Drink a glass of water 10 minutes before your meal to take the edge off your appetite.
- Make less food look like more by serving your meal on a smaller plate.

You don't have to give up the foods you love... just cut down portion size, and eat it less often.



Senator

Roxanne J. Persaud
19th Senate District

What All New Yorkers Should Know about

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

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Dear Friend,

Many New Yorkers are taking steps to improve their health and well-being. Yet the number of people being diagnosed and living with one medical condition continues to soar – diabetes, a chronic disease that increases the risk of serious complications and premature death.

Type 2 diabetes keeps the body from breaking down sugars in food correctly. *(There is also a type 1 diabetes, but that form of the disease is much less common. When people speak of a growing epidemic of diabetes, they mean type 2.)* The exact cause of diabetes remains a mystery, though genetics plays a role, as does obesity and a sedentary lifestyle.

While nearly 29 million children and adults in the United States, or about 9.3 percent of the population, are estimated to have diabetes, roughly one-third are unaware. Diabetes often goes undiagnosed because many of its symptoms seem so harmless. Before type 2 diabetes develops, however, people often have a condition known as “pre-diabetes” – blood sugar levels that are higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

Fortunately, research has shown that persons with pre-diabetes can delay or prevent the development of disease by taking small steps towards living a healthier life.

In some cases, even modest changes in diet and exercise may be able to return blood sugar levels to the normal range.

In this brochure, I provide background material on type 2 diabetes, simple steps to help “turn back the clock” to delay or prevent the progression to diabetes, and a list of resources that you can turn to for additional information.

Don't wait for the warning signs of diabetes to appear. Find out if you are at risk by talking with your health care provider at your next visit.

I hope you find the information in this brochure helpful. As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Roxanne J. Persaud

Roxanne J. Persaud
19th Senate District

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes



Fighting health disparities

When we speak of health disparities, the term refers to notable differences in the burden of disease or other health problems that exist among certain groups of people, based on such factors as race or ethnicity.

In this case, statistics show that when viewed as a group, ethnic and racial minorities are at increased risk for developing diabetes. According to the US Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Minority Health, African-American adults are 70 percent more likely than non-Hispanic white adults to have been diagnosed with diabetes by a physician. Hispanics are 1.7 times as likely.

Identifying health disparities is a first step toward understanding what causes them and what can be done to reduce them. Of course, a number of risk factors contribute to the diabetes disparities seen in minority communities. Persons are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if they:

- Are of African-American, Hispanic, American-Indian, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander descent;
- Have a parent or sibling with diabetes;
- Are over the age of 45;
- Have high blood pressure and high cholesterol;
- Are overweight or obese;
- Are not physically active; and
- Have had gestational diabetes.

(diabetes during pregnancy).

Each ethnic and racial group has distinct cultural strengths to draw upon when fighting diabetes. Indeed, community-based initiatives have the power to help at-risk individuals and families take the steps needed to stop diabetes in its tracks. Whether it be a cooking class to demonstrate new methods of preparing favorite foods, or an exercise program geared towards incorporating movement in everyday life, education is the key.

Culturally sensitive educational programs not only serve to reduce health disparities in hard hit communities, but can also improve quality of life for generations to come.

Source: US Office of Minority Health

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Warning signs of diabetes



Sometimes the symptoms of type 2 diabetes are obvious; other times they appear subtle, which make them easy to shrug off. The fact is, diabetes often remains undiagnosed until

health complications occur. But early detection and treatment can decrease the likelihood of developing dangerous complications. That's why it's so important to know how to spot the warning signs of diabetes.

Remember, these symptoms may develop gradually.

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Increased hunger
- Unusual, unexplained weight loss
- Increased fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing sores or cuts

Resource: American Diabetes Association

Healthful food choices, made clear

It's all well and good to hear the phrase, "make healthy food choices," but what exactly does that mean? Nowadays, knowing what to eat can be confusing. Everywhere you turn, there is news about what is and isn't good for you.

Thankfully, certain basic nutritional facts have stood the test of time. Here are some tips, courtesy of the American Diabetes Association, on making healthier choices for you and your family.

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, especially non-starchy ones such as carrots, broccoli, spinach or green beans. Maximize variety, from the rainbow of colors.
- Choose whole grain foods instead of processed grain products. For instance, try brown rice, oats or whole wheat macaroni.
- Include beans (like kidney or pinto beans), lentils or black-eyed peas in your meals.
- Eat a serving of fish two to three times per week.
- Remove the skin from chicken and turkey.
- Choose lean meats.
- Cook with a variety of spices instead of salt.
- Work your way down from whole milk to 2% to 1% until you're drinking and cooking with fat-free (skim) milk.
- Choose water and calorie-free "diet" drinks instead of regular soda, fruit punch, sweet tea and other sugar-sweetened drinks.
- Cut back on high calorie snacks and desserts. Always keep a healthy snack with you.



HELPFUL AND INFORMATIVE WEBSITES AND TOLL-FREE HOTLINES

The American Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.org * 1-800-342-2383

The US Office of Minority Health
www.hhs.gov * 1-800-444-6472

The National Diabetes Education Program
<http://ndep.nih.gov>

The New York State Department of Health
<http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/conditions/diabetes>

www.learningaboutdiabetes.org

A non-profit website that offers free patient education booklets and handouts

