

# Preventing and managing type 2 diabetes

Making healthy lifestyle changes can help you prevent type 2 diabetes. If you have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, these can help you manage your blood sugar levels.

**Be physically active.** Work up to the activity recommendations for adults. That means getting 150 minutes of cardiovascular activity and two strength training sessions a week. Schedule activity at least three times a week. Talk to your provider if you aren't currently active. Follow their guidelines for activity and, if needed, check your blood sugar when you are active.

**Eat well.** Eat a balanced diet with lots of non-starchy vegetables and smaller portions of whole grains, fruit and lean proteins. Choose foods high in fiber and low in salt, saturated fats and trans fats.

**Follow healthy habits.** Identify ways to manage personal stress. Aim for 7-9 hours of good quality sleep each night. If you use tobacco products, start planning how to quit.

**Reach and maintain a healthy body size.** Your provider may recommend a weight for you that is different than the standard BMI and weight goals.

**Follow medical guidance.** Take your medications as directed. Keep your appointments for routine bloodwork on the schedule your provider recommends.

## Premise pillars of lifestyle medicine



### Nutrition

Add more vegetables, fruits and whole grains into your day.



### Movement

Get active, sit less and move more.



### Sleep

Aim for 7–8 hours restful sleep each day.



### Emotional Wellbeing

Focus on positivity, happiness and meaningful relationships.



### Hydrate

Make water your preferred beverage.



### Substance Free

Live a life free of tobacco products, illegal drugs, prescription drug abuse/misuse, alcohol in excess, etc.



### Outdoors

Enjoy sunshine and fresh air.

#### Our sources

American Diabetes Association. (2021). Type 2 diabetes. <https://www.diabetes.org/diabetes/type-2>

<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (June 11, 2021). Diabetes Fast Facts. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/quick-facts.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (August 10, 2021). Type 2 Diabetes. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/type2.html>



## Type 2 diabetes



## About type 2 diabetes

Twenty percent of people with diabetes don't even know they have it.<sup>1</sup>

Millions of Americans have been diagnosed with diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is the most common type, making up over 90% of diagnoses. Another 88 million American adults have prediabetes, which puts them at risk for type 2 diabetes.<sup>1</sup>

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that involves the insulin hormone. When your insulin isn't working well, sugar from digested food stays in your bloodstream instead of moving into your body to give you energy. This results in high blood sugar, also called blood glucose, which means you have too much sugar in your bloodstream. The good news is that you can help your body control your blood sugar.

High blood sugar can be dangerous when left untreated. However, it can be identified when you have your bloodwork done at your annual provider visit. One high blood sugar reading does not mean you have diabetes. Be sure to discuss your results with your provider.

You can live a healthy, happy life with type 2 diabetes when you know how to manage the condition.

### Blood sugar ranges

| Blood Sugar   |                       |               |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Category      | Fasting blood glucose | A1c           |
| Normal        | Less than 100         | Less than 5.7 |
| Elevated risk | 100 – 125             | 5.7 – 6.4     |
| High risk     | 126 or higher         | 6.5 or higher |

Your provider may adjust these ranges based on your health concerns and goals.

### Risk factors

Some groups of people are at higher risk for type 2 diabetes.

#### These include people who:

- Have parents or siblings with type 2 diabetes
- Are 45 or older
- Have a BMI above their goal
- Exercise less than three days a week
- Have had diabetes during a pregnancy or had a baby weighing more than nine pounds
- Are African American, Hispanic or Latino American, American Indian, Asian American, a Pacific Islander or an Alaska Native

## Signs of type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes may not get diagnosed for years because the signs can be easy to miss.

#### Common signs include:

- Frequent urination
- Extreme thirst, hunger or fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Dry skin and cuts, sores or bruises that heal slowly
- Having more infections than usual
- Unplanned weight loss
- Tingling, numbness or pain in your hands or feet

If your blood sugar stays too high for too long, it can lead to heart disease, kidney disease and nerve damage, which can lead to loss of your toes and feet. You can help prevent these long-term issues by managing your diabetes to lower your blood sugar.

The first step is noticing the signs and seeing your provider to get an early diagnosis.