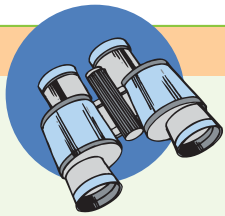


Pre-diabetes

Act now to protect your health



LOOKING AHEAD TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

Pre-diabetes puts you at risk for diabetes and other health problems. But there's a lot you can do to protect your health:

- Become more physically active every day
- Lose weight
- Stop smoking

Studies show that these lifestyle changes can delay—or even prevent—diabetes. In fact, by acting now to improve your health, you may reduce your risk of diabetes by almost 60%.

Have you just been told you have pre-diabetes? If so, you're probably wondering what it is, and what it means for your health. This handout tells you what you need to know to protect your health.

WHAT IS PRE-DIABETES?

If you have pre-diabetes, you have more sugar (glucose) in your blood than normal—but not so much that you can be diagnosed with diabetes.

normal	pre-diabetes	diabetes
less than 100 mg/dL	100 to 125 mg/dL	126 mg/dL or greater

Results above are for a fasting plasma glucose test.

Glucose comes from the food you eat, and is the body's main source of fuel. *High* blood glucose is a sign that your body is having trouble getting energy from your food. (Instead of moving easily into your cells where it can be burned for energy, glucose is building up in your bloodstream.) It also means that you have a higher risk of the following:

- **Developing diabetes.** Many people with pre-diabetes go on to develop diabetes. Diabetes is a life-long disease that can cause serious problems throughout your body.
- **Having a heart attack, stroke, or other cardiovascular problem.** Over time, high levels of blood glucose can damage your blood vessels and vital organs.

The good news? Studies show that making lifestyle changes today—such as becoming more physically active and losing weight—can go a long way toward lowering your blood glucose. In some cases, doctors prescribe a medication called metformin to help lower blood glucose. And as you lower your blood glucose, **you can lower your risk of serious health problems.**

The term “pre-diabetes” is sometimes used along with—or in place of—these terms:

- Borderline diabetes
- Impaired fasting glucose
- Impaired glucose tolerance
- Metabolic syndrome (Syndrome X, insulin resistance syndrome)

Why so many terms? The term your doctor uses may be an older term, or come from a test you've had. Or, the term might reflect the combination of health risks you face. But whatever you call it, the result is the same: a greater risk of diabetes and other health problems unless you act now to protect your health.

Pre-diabetes
also known as...

WHO'S AT RISK FOR PRE-DIABETES?

Although anyone can get pre-diabetes, you're more likely to develop it if you're overweight—especially if you carry extra weight around your waistline. Excess fat makes it harder for your body to convert glucose into energy. This is especially true if you're middle-aged or older.

The box below lists the main risk factors for pre-diabetes and diabetes.

Risk factors

- Excess weight or obesity
- Age 45 or older
- A family history of diabetes
- Ethnic background (African American, Pacific Islander, Hispanic American, or Asian American)
- Past delivery of a baby weighing more than 9 pounds, or previous gestational diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Abnormal blood lipid levels (low HDL cholesterol, high triglycerides)
- Physical inactivity

People with one or more of these risk factors should ask their doctor about getting tested for diabetes.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF PRE-DIABETES?

You probably won't notice any symptoms—pre-diabetes is called a “silent condition.” But that doesn't mean you can ignore it! Even if your blood glucose levels are only slightly high, they may already be damaging your body and setting the stage for more health problems later on.

If you face a particular combination of health risks—but don't yet show high blood glucose—your doctor may still consider you “pre-diabetic.” For example, high blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol, and waistline obesity together signal an increased risk for heart disease and diabetes.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW TO IMPROVE MY HEALTH?

Here are a few important steps you can take today:



Learn more.

Intermountain Healthcare offers classes on pre-diabetes in various locations. These classes can tell you what you need to know to treat your pre-diabetes. They also provide a good chance to work with a healthcare provider to create personal goals and plans.

Ask your doctor's office staff for the phone number of the nearest education center.

For pre-diabetes classes, call:



Begin lifestyle changes today.

With the guidance of your health educator or doctor, make these changes as soon as possible:

- **Be more physically active every day.** Besides formal exercise, boost your activity all day long by taking the stairs, walking while on the phone, and so on.
- **Lose weight.** A balanced diet with smaller portions will help. So will regular exercise. Ask a dietitian for help with a meal plan to help you lose weight safely—at the rate of about 1 to 2 pounds per week.
- **Stop smoking.** You'll feel better—and instantly reduce your chance of heart problems, lung cancer, and diabetes.



Follow up with your doctor.

You need to have your blood glucose re-tested every 6 months or so. Get an appointment and pre-visit instructions from your doctor.