

Pre-diabetes

People with pre-diabetes have blood glucose levels that are higher than normal, but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis. Recent research shows that if you have this condition, you're not only at risk for developing type 2 diabetes—but you're also more likely to have a heart attack or stroke.

Fortunately, pre-diabetes can be treated. Weight loss and regular exercise have been shown to be most helpful in lowering blood glucose levels in people with pre-diabetes. In fact, studies show that these changes can delay—and perhaps even prevent—the onset of diabetes and other problems.

Here are a few of the most striking findings from the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), an important new research study conducted on people with pre-diabetes:

- Participants who were counseled on effective diet, exercise, and behavior modification reduced their risk of developing diabetes by 58%. This was true across all participating ethnic groups, and for both men and women.
- Lifestyle changes worked particularly well for participants aged 60 and older, reducing their diabetes risk by 71%.



Exercise and an effective diet can help reduce the risk of developing diabetes.



RUNNING THE NUMBERS... AND RUNNING THE RISKS

People with pre-diabetes have fasting blood glucose levels of 100-125 mg/dL. This is higher than normal (less than 100 mg/dL), but not high enough for a diabetes diagnosis (126 mg/dL and above). See the next chapter for more on diagnostic tests and what the results mean.

If you have certain other health risks—but don't yet have blood glucose above 100 mg/dL—your doctor may still consider you "pre-diabetic." For example, high blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol, and waist-line obesity together signal an increased risk for diabetes. They also put you at a higher risk for heart disease.

You should always take a pre-diabetes diagnosis seriously—and take steps to reverse it by losing weight and getting more exercise.