

Diabetes screening and prevention



More than 29 million Americans are living with diabetes, and 86 million are living with prediabetes, a serious health condition that increases a person's risk of type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases. And many adults with prediabetes don't even know they're in the danger zone. In order to identify those individuals and help minimize the likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends diabetes screening as part of a cardiovascular risk assessment for adults 40 through 70 years of age who are overweight or obese.

Diabetes screening

There are several different tests used to screen for diabetes.

- **Hemoglobin A1C**
- **Fasting blood sugar (FBS)**
- **A two-hour oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT)**

The American Diabetes Association recommends diabetes screening for everyone at age 45. The ADA also recommends screening for adults younger than 45 if they are overweight or obese and have one or more risk factors for diabetes. Follow-up screening is recommended at least every three years for a negative result depending on risk factors, and at least annually for people with prediabetes.

Diabetes prevention

Before someone develops type 2 diabetes, they almost always have prediabetes – fasting blood sugar (glucose) levels between 100 - 125 mg/DL (higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes).

Prediabetes is a red flag for future diabetes risk and is your opportunity to make changes to help avoid type 2 diabetes and its serious health consequences. Recent research shows that long-term damage to the body, especially the heart and blood vessels, may already occur during prediabetes. Fortunately, research also shows that if you take action when prediabetes is detected, you may be able to delay or prevent type 2 diabetes.



Knowing the risk factors and signs of prediabetes can help you delay or prevent type 2 diabetes.



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If you have prediabetes, it is important to:

- **Seek counseling and instruction on weight loss if you are overweight.** Even modest amounts of weight loss in persons who are overweight will help to reduce the risk for developing diabetes. Include follow-up counseling for your weight loss – it increases your chance for success.
- **Increase your physical activity.** Talk with your health care provider before beginning a new exercise program. Start slow and gradually increase the intensity and the number of minutes.

- **Get a fasting blood sugar test** every year to check for diabetes.
- **Work with your physician** and take action on your other risk factors for heart disease (tobacco use, high blood pressure, high cholesterol).
- **Talk with your doctor** about whether taking metformin to prevent type 2 diabetes is right for you – especially if you have a high BMI, are 60 years old or greater, have a history of gestational diabetes and/or your A1C continues to increase despite lifestyle changes.

If you've been diagnosed with prediabetes, this is your chance to help avoid type 2 diabetes. Don't let your opportunity slip away.

Risk factors for diabetes

A1C equal to or greater than 5.7%

First-degree relative with diabetes

Certain high-risk races (African-American, Latino, Native American, Asian American or Pacific Islander)

History of gestational diabetes

High blood pressure (B/P greater or equal to 140/90 mmHg or taking medicine for high blood pressure)

History of cardiovascular disease

HDL cholesterol less than 35 or triglycerides greater than 250

Women with polycystic ovary syndrome

Physical inactivity

