Five Small Steps to Prevent Diabetes

Almost 16 million Americans are well on their way to developing diabetes, but most don’t even know it. They have a condition called pre-diabetes, which means their blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not yet diabetic.

The good news is there is now scientific proof that the disease and its devastating complications, such as heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, or losing a foot or leg, can be delayed or prevented.

The key to diabetes prevention is taking small steps toward living a healthier life, according to the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Research sponsored by the National Institutes of Health showed that people with pre-diabetes lowered their risk of developing diabetes by more than half by getting 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week and losing five to seven percent of their weight.

If you are over 45 and overweight, you are at increased risk for pre-diabetes. NDEP recommends taking these five small steps to live healthier and prevent diabetes:

1. Find out if you are at risk for diabetes. Talk to your health care provider at your next visit.
2. Set realistic goals for increasing your physical activity. Start by making small changes. Try to get 15 minutes of physical activity a day this week. Each week add five minutes until you build up to the recommended 30 minutes a day, most days.
3. Make better food choices. Try to eat more fruits and vegetables (five to nine servings a day), beans, and whole grains. Reduce the amount of fat in your diet. Choose grilled or baked foods instead of fried.
4. Record your progress. Write down everything you eat and drink. Keeping a food diary is helpful to lose weight and keep it off. Review the diary with your health care provider.
5. Keep at it. Making even modest lifestyle changes can be tough in the beginning. Try adding one new healthy change a week. If you fall back to old habits, get back on track again. The key is to keep trying.


National Wellness Institute
Member Services
1300 College Court · PO Box 827
Stevens Point, WI 54481-0827