



### Seven Tips for People with Prediabetes to Avoid Developing Type 2 Diabetes

#### 1. Lose extra weight, and keep it off

While diabetes concerns people of every weight, obesity is a major risk factor.<sup>1</sup> Currently, more than one-third of American adults – more than 72 million people – and 16 percent of children in the U.S. are obese. In fact, if current obesity trends remain the same, by 2050 up to one-third of adult Americans could have diabetes.<sup>2</sup>

The good news is that progression to diabetes is not inevitable for people with prediabetes, and weight control can play a key role in helping to halt the development of the disease. For example, a person with prediabetes who reduces body weight by at least five percent can help prevent the development of type 2 diabetes by 58 percent.

#### 2. Get more physical activity

Engaging in regular physical activity is crucial to maintaining a healthy weight, as well as overall physical and emotional health and wellness. Exercise can help the body lower and manage blood sugar levels.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, research shows that regular exercise can help prevent and control diabetes, and walking 150 minutes per week can reduce the risk of developing diabetes by more than half.

#### 3. Be informed about your risk and condition

Of the 57 million Americans who are considered prediabetic, an alarming 85 percent are unaware of their condition.

Everyone needs to be aware of the risks of diabetes and get the appropriate screening tests done by a doctor – particularly those struggling with weight problems. The American Diabetes Association recommends that individuals speak to their doctors about scheduling a blood glucose (sugar) screening if they are:

- Age 45 or older and overweight
- Younger than 45 and overweight, having any other risk factors for diabetes or prediabetes, including:
  - High blood pressure
  - Low HDL cholesterol and high triglycerides
  - A family history of diabetes
  - A history of gestational diabetes
  - Gave birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
  - Belong to an ethnic or minority group at high risk for diabetes

<sup>1</sup> U.S. National Library of Medicine

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<sup>3</sup> The Mayo Clinic

#### **4. Make consistent, healthier nutritional choices**

While many fad diets promise to help shed pounds fast, people with prediabetes should instead focus on making healthy choices all the time. Creating an overall healthy eating plan that incorporates plenty of nutritional variety can help stop the progression of the disease. This means eating plenty of leafy green vegetables, fruits, lean meats and fish.

But, remember: eating too much of even healthy foods can lead to weight gain, so controlling portion sizes is very important.<sup>4</sup>

#### **5. Eat more whole grains and fiber**

Whole grains and fiber-rich foods provide a number of important nutrients and minerals that contribute to a healthy diet for anyone. But a recent study <sup>5</sup> found that eating more whole grains and brown rice instead of refined grains and white rice may help lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. This is because the rich nutrients and fiber found in whole grains slow the release of sugar into the bloodstream, and naturally help the body manage blood sugar levels.

#### **6. Avoid saturated fats**

Saturated fats can seriously undermine health and increase the risk of developing diabetes other serious conditions. Saturated fat raises blood cholesterol levels and can increase the risk of heart disease. People who have diabetes are already at high risk, and should reduce these fats to help avoid heart attack or stroke. Replacing fats like butter and mayonnaise with olive or nut oil, or even avocado, is a good way for prediabetic people to begin enjoying a healthier diet while working to prevent the disease.

#### **7. Manage carbohydrates for a healthy diet**

Knowing what type and how many carbohydrates to eat can be confusing, but one thing is simple: foods that contain carbohydrates raise blood glucose levels. Therefore, it is important for a prediabetic person to:

- Understand how the three types of carbohydrates affect the body (starches, sugars and fiber)
- Keep track of how many carbohydrates they eat
- Make sure they are eating enough of the right kinds of carbohydrates

While every individual's metabolism is different, a person who is prediabetic should talk with their doctor or dietician about setting a healthy carbohydrate limit. Understanding and maintaining control over carbohydrates will help keep blood sugar levels within the target range.

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<sup>4</sup> American Diabetes Association

<sup>5</sup> "White Rice, Brown Rice, and Risk of Type 2 Diabetes in US Men and Women."

Qi Sun, Donna Spiegelman, Rob M. van Dam, Michelle D. Holmes, Vasanti S. Malik, Walter C. Willett, Frank B. Hu.