

# FitFacts®

## My Doctor Says That I Have Prediabetes. What Does This Mean?

“PREDIABETES” MEANS THAT THE AMOUNT OF SUGAR (GLUCOSE) IN YOUR BLOOD IS HIGHER THAN NORMAL, BUT NOT HIGH ENOUGH TO BE CONSIDERED [TYPE 2 DIABETES](#). IT IS COMMON FOR A PERSON WITH PREDIABETES TO FEEL COMPLETELY NORMAL. HOWEVER, IT IS A SERIOUS MEDICAL CONDITION THAT, IF LEFT UNTREATED, OFTEN PROGRESSES TO TYPE 2 DIABETES.

The good news is that a few lifestyle changes can add up in a big way to prevent type 2 diabetes and the negative health impact of pre-diabetes. A groundbreaking research study, the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), proved that losing a small amount of weight through lifestyle change was more effective than medicine in reversing prediabetes.

The DPP’s recommendations for weight loss can be incorporated into anyone’s lifestyle. If you have pre-diabetes, here are 8 steps to better health:

1. **Assess your level of motivation.** Ask yourself, “Can I make the commitment to improve my health? Am I willing to put in the hard work that is necessary to make lasting change?” If so, you are ready to take the next step.
2. **Commit to healthier eating.** Avoid “fad” diets or any product that promises “quick and easy” weight loss. Participants in the DPP lost weight by keeping a daily food journal of everything that they ate and drank. They also focused on eating foods that were lower in fat and calories.
3. **Make physical activity** a priority. Set a long-term goal to be physically active for 150 minutes each week. Brisk walking for 30 minutes, 5 days a week is a great way to meet this goal. Make sure to choose activities that you enjoy and ask a friend or family member to join you. If you are currently not doing any activity, gradually build up to this amount over 4-5 weeks.
4. **Aim to lose a small amount of weight.** If you are overweight, losing just 7% of your body weight (and keeping it off) is enough to reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes by 58%. Weigh yourself once a week at the same time of day and keep a record your weights. A healthy rate of weight loss is 1-2 pounds per week.
5. **Build a support system.** Ask friends and family members to encourage you and keep you accountable in your efforts. Individuals who have a supportive network are more likely to lose weight and keep it off.
6. **Assess barriers.** Identify situations that may derail your weight loss efforts



and plan for how you will respond to them. For example, a person with a busy schedule may need to begin packing meals in order to avoid eating fast food.

7. **Get regular check-ups.** Your health care provider will monitor your prediabetes and will determine whether you need further testing or medications as part of your treatment plan.
8. **Focus on the positive.** You are more likely to meet your goals if you focus on the positive aspects of your journey to better health rather than your setbacks.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[American Council on Exercise](#)

Knowler, W.C., et al (2002). Reduction in the Incidence of Type 2 Diabetes with Lifestyle Intervention or Metformin. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 346, 6, 393-403.

[Centers for Disease Control: National Diabetes Prevention Program](#)