

# PREVENTING TYPE 2 DIABETES



Much of the food we eat (carbs) is turned into **glucose**, or sugar, for our bodies to use for energy. The **pancreas**, an organ near the stomach, makes a hormone called **insulin** to help sugar get into the cells of our bodies. When a person has **diabetes**, their body does not make enough insulin or cannot use its own insulin properly, causing sugars to build up in the blood. Over time, this extra sugar causes damage and can lead to serious problems like heart disease, stroke, vision loss, kidney disease, nerve damage, amputations and even early death.

Some types of diabetes like **Type 1 diabetes** and **gestational diabetes** (diabetes during pregnancy) cannot be prevented, but **Type 2 diabetes** (the most common type among Americans) can be!

About 9% of the U.S. population has a form of diabetes, and even more than that have **prediabetes**, a condition that if not treated can lead to Type 2 diabetes within five years.

## Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes:

- **Uncontrollable:** age, family history of diabetes, personal history of gestational diabetes, race (Latino, African American, Native American, Asian American), Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome
- **Controllable:** lack of exercise, being overweight/obese, poor heart health (i.e. high blood pressure, high triglycerides)

*\* Take a 60-second Type 2 diabetes risk test! [diabetes.org/widhrisktest](https://diabetes.org/widhrisktest)*

## Diabetes warning signs:

Needing to use the bathroom a lot, feeling hungry/thirsty all the time, blurred vision, slow wound-healing, feeling tired all the time, tingling or numb hands/feet, sudden weight loss, dark skin changes in neck, armpit, or groin

*\*If you experience any of these, speak with your healthcare provider! He or she can screen for diabetes (i.e. A1c test)*

## Reducing your risk:

- **Get active.** Aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity each week. That's about 30 minutes five days a week. Find something you enjoy and that gets your heart rate up.
- **Control your weight.** Being overweight or obese is the number one controllable risk factor for Type 2 diabetes. Losing even a few pounds can make a huge difference in reducing your risk.
- **Eat well.** Too much sugar won't directly give you diabetes, but it can lead to weight gain. Focus on eating healthier carbs from sources like whole grains, beans, and legumes instead of refined carbs from sweets, sugary drinks, and processed food. Practice portion control!
- **Manage your stress.** Find healthy coping techniques like deep breathing, exercise, and journaling to keep body and mind well.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

American Diabetes Association: [diabetes.org](https://diabetes.org)

MyPlate: [choosemyplate.gov](https://choosemyplate.gov)

National Diabetes Prevention Program: [cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/](https://cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/)

Wisconsin Chronic Disease Prevention Program: [preventdiabeteswi.org](https://preventdiabeteswi.org)



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