

I've been diagnosed with prediabetes. What does that mean?

December 21 2022, by Tara Wilde



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If you've been diagnosed with prediabetes, it means your blood sugar levels are not high enough to be classified as Type 2 diabetes, but are high enough to indicate a need for change.

A normal fasting [blood sugar](#) level is below 100; whereas, the level of a person with prediabetes is between 100 and 126. Once levels have surpassed 126, it's classified as Type 2 [diabetes](#). This indicates that the body resists [insulin](#) or doesn't produce enough of it to maintain normal blood sugar levels. Other names used for prediabetes are impaired [fasting glucose](#), glucose tolerance, impaired glucose tolerance and borderline diabetes.

Foods high in carbohydrates raise blood sugar more than other foods. During digestion, the pancreas produces insulin, which then binds the sugar in the blood and takes it into cells as a source of energy. If you have prediabetes, sugar begins to build up in the bloodstream rather than fuel the cells. This is when [insulin resistance](#) occurs, which is believed to be the No. 1 cause of prediabetes.

A healthy weight allows insulin to work more efficiently and can help to keep blood sugars within a normal range. A [healthy diet](#) and [regular exercise](#) are the best ways to help bring your [blood sugar levels](#) back to a healthy range.

What factors increase risk for developing prediabetes?

The same factors that may increase risk of a person of getting Type 2 diabetes also may increase the risk of prediabetes, such as:

- Overweight or obesity
- Excess weight in the abdomen
- Family history of diabetes
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Age 35 or older
- Previous [gestational diabetes](#) diagnosis
- High cholesterol

- High blood pressure
- Race or ethnicity, as African American, Hispanic, American Indian and Asian American people are more likely to develop prediabetes

When should someone be tested?

If you're 35 or older, you should have your fasting blood sugar checked every year during your physical exam. If you've had gestational diabetes, it's important to have your blood sugar checked each year as this increases your risk of developing prediabetes or Type 2 diabetes.

What are prediabetes symptoms?

People often don't know they have prediabetes because they may not experience any symptoms.

People with prediabetes or especially Type 2 diabetes may experience some of these symptoms:

- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Frequent urination
- Increased thirst
- Increased hunger

What are next steps?

After diagnosis, you may be referred to a diabetes educator who can customize a plan to help you manage your health and well-being.

You also will learn lifestyle skills to manage prediabetes and Type 2

diabetes. This may include meal planning, exercise, medication management, stress management and sleep hygiene. People with prediabetes may be able to prevent or delay the development of Type 2 diabetes significantly through [lifestyle changes](#) including achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

It's important to know that most prediabetes treatment plans do not include medications or routine monitoring of blood sugar.

What are the consequences of diabetes?

Diabetes can have long-term health [consequences](#).

Your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes is higher if you have prediabetes, and this increases your health risk for:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Eye damage, including blindness
- Limb amputation
- Kidney failure

Talk to your health care team if you have any questions or concerns about your blood sugar level, or if you develop any Type 2 diabetes symptoms.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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