

# Preventing and Managing Diabetes Through Healthy Living

## *Tips on Healthy Living*



NorthCare Network

# Preventing and Managing Diabetes Through Healthy Living

## Improving Your Wellness Through a Healthy Lifestyle

By living healthy, you CAN have a big impact on your health. If you live a healthier lifestyle, by eating well, being active, and getting enough rest, you will probably enjoy greater health and help prevent serious diseases such as diabetes.



## Diabetes Basics

Diabetes is a serious and chronic disease that can usually be prevented. It comes in two forms, **type 2- and type 1 diabetes:**

- **type 2 diabetes** is the most common form, and can be **prevented while in its prediabetes form.**
  - **95% of diabetes cases are type 2 diabetes.**
  - **type 2 diabetes** can develop at any age.
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- **type 1 diabetes** is rare.
  - **only 5% of diabetes cases are type 1 diabetes.**
  - **Currently, for type 1 diabetes there is no known prevention.**

**Prediabetes**, also called **impaired fasting glucose**, is very common. It is the precondition to diabetes that is detectable when your **blood glucose levels are higher than normal**. It is estimated that **1 out of 3** adults have this condition. **Managing prediabetes with life-style changes can reverse this condition** and help prevent type 2 diabetes.

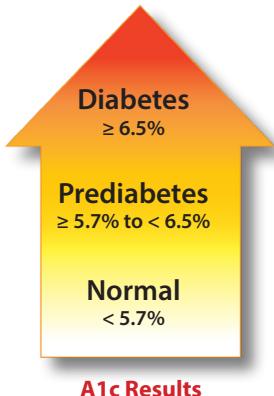
## How Type 2 and Type 1 Diabetes Works

With **type 2 diabetes**, your body **cannot use insulin properly**. Having **type 2 diabetes** is a serious disease. Without intervention and management, it can create serious health risks like: **heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure and potential loss of toes, feet, and legs.** **With type 1 diabetes you must take insulin every day.**

## Testing

To determine your diabetes risk, talk to your health care providers about having a **blood sugar test**.

**One test is called A1c** (there are other types of tests for diabetes). This test does not require fasting and measures average blood glucose over 2 to 3 months. The arrow (right) shows results by blood glucose readings.



## Major risk factors

- *Being overweight and physically inactive less than 150 minutes a week*
- *Being 45 years or older*
- *Having family members with diabetes*
- *Being an ethnicity that is more prone to diabetes*
- *Having diabetes while pregnant*

## Small Steps for Healthy Living

There are small changes you can make to your lifestyle to **help prevent or better manage diabetes** and improve your health. The following tips can improve your wellness.



**Eat healthier and reduce your risk of diabetes and other diseases.** Eating more fruits and vegetables, instead of chips and cookies, can provide more fiber and deliver better nutrition. The less processed or “junk” food you eat, the better.

**Lose weight by changing your eating habits.** Changes like eating slower and taking smaller portions can make a big difference.

**Drink more fluids, especially water and low-fat milk (instead of pop or juice).**

This new habit will increase your energy and help you lose weight. If you drink a glass of water before a meal, it can help decrease your appetite.

**Develop new habits like walking when you feel strong emotions.** It is easy to eat for the wrong reasons. Perhaps you eat when you feel sad, mad, or frustrated instead of when you are hungry. Instead of eating when you are emotional, try a healthier response like walking.

## Lifestyle-change Prevention

Lifestyle-change program participants who **lost 5-7% of their body weight** and added **150 minutes of exercise per week** **cut their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by up to 58% (71% for people over 60 years old)**. Having a healthy diet can also help prevent diabetes and other diseases.

### Eating Fiber and Whole Grains: How it Helps Your Health

Foods high in fiber include fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, and nuts. Try to make sure half of your grains are whole grains (whole grain breads, crackers, cereals, and brown rice). When you increase the fiber and whole grains in your diet, it helps you by:

- **Reducing** your risk of diabetes by improving your blood sugar control
- **Lowering** your risk of heart disease
- **Promoting** weight loss by helping you feel full

### Five Tips for Diabetes Prevention and Management

1. Eat plenty of fiber including more whole grains
2. Lose extra weight and watch fat calories
3. Get more physical activity
4. Decrease daily stress
5. Get enough sleep, about 8 hours

### Physical Activity, Stress Reduction, and Sleep

Making lifestyle changes like being more active, decreasing stress, and getting enough rest can greatly improve your health and wellness.

## Good Nutrition Improves Wellness

Eating healthy means having a balanced diet of the **Five Food Groups: Carbohydrates, Fruits and Vegetables, Milk and Dairy, Proteins, and Fats and Sugars**.

**Carbohydrates** include pasta, rice, oats, potatoes, as well as whole grain breads and cereals. They give you energy and **provide calcium and B vitamins**. Whole grains contain **fiber** for digestive health.

**Fruits and Vegetables** include apples, bananas, strawberries, potatoes, carrots, lettuce, and tomatoes. They provide **natural sugars and vitamins** for energy. They also



help provide **dietary fiber** and chemicals called **antioxidants** which keep your **skin and body healthy**.

**Milk and Dairy** include foods like milk, cheese, and yogurt. It gives you **calcium, protein, vitamins A, D, and B12** for your diet and helps build **healthy bones and teeth**.



**Proteins** include lean cuts of chicken, beef, or pork, along with eggs, fish, and beans. They are sources of **protein, iron, minerals, and vitamins** that keep your body strong. Eating **these kinds of proteins** can help **build healthier tissue and muscles**.

**Fats and Sugars – Fats** include red meats, hot dogs, nuts, avocados, and tuna fish. **Some fats are healthier than others.** **Fats** are better the **less processed** they are. Eat healthier **unsaturated fats** found in tuna, salmon, avocados, and nuts as well as olive and other cooking oils. **Saturated fats** can **raise cholesterol.** **Avoid TRANS fats** as these are **bad for your health**.

**Sugars** from fruits or vegetables are healthier than **processed sugars**. They provide more **energy, nutrients, and fiber**. Sugars include sugars from fruits as well as sweets like cookies, candy, and fruit juices. Many **processed foods** contain both fats and sugars. Often these foods have **“empty” calories with no nutritional value**.

## Fat Facts and Understanding Cholesterol

- Fats are necessary for health and help to absorb vitamins. All fats are a combination of 3 types: **saturated, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated fats.**
- **Saturated fats** may have some health benefits but they should be **eaten in moderation** as they raise **“bad” LDL cholesterol**. Also, avoid **hydrogenated oils (or “trans” fats)**.

- When eating **saturated fats**, choose lean cuts of beef, chicken, and pork and avoid animal fats. **Avoid trans fats** that can be found in cookies, crackers, and snack (processed) foods.

#### Fats: Know the Differences

1) Saturated

2) Unsaturated

Polyunsaturated and Monounsaturates

- Polyunsaturated fats** can lower **bad LDL cholesterol** and they can also lower “**good**” **HDL cholesterol**. Some polyunsaturates contain **Omega-3 fatty acids**, a special fat that may protect the immune system. Omega-3 fatty acids may lower heart disease.

**Omega-3 fatty acids** are found in tuna, salmon, walnuts, sesame and sunflower seeds, corn and sunflower oils and may provide health benefits like **lowering risk of heart disease**.

- Monounsaturated fats are the healthiest fats** as they protect “**good**” **HDL cholesterol** and can lower “**bad**” **LDL cholesterol**. **Monounsaturated fats** are found in plant oils like olive, canola, and peanut. These oils are the most **heart-healthy**.

#### Cholesterol: Know Your Three Numbers

##### 1) Total Cholesterol: know your number

There are also two kinds of cholesterol to track:

2) LDL (bad) cholesterol: want low ↓ numbers

3) HDL (good) cholesterol: want high ↑ numbers

It is best to eat **less than 300 mg/day of cholesterol**. It is best to eat **less than 20mg/day of saturated fats**. All fats are high in calories, **so eat in moderation**.

## Reading Food Labels for Nutrition Facts

### Why Read Food Labels?

Food labels provide **Nutrition Facts** to help you make quick, smart choices on healthy eating. **Labels tell you:**

- Size** of one serving (such as 1 cup or 15 pieces)
- How many servings** are in the container (like 2 servings)
- Per serving information** like total calories, fat calories, total fats and cholesterol, as well as sodium, fiber, sugar, protein, and vitamins
- Recommend Daily Values (DVs)** for a 2000 daily calorie diet

Percents given on labels represent a percentage of the 100% DVs *recommended*. For example, if total fat on a label was 18%, it would mean **one serving has 18% of the 100% DV fat** required for 2,000 calorie diet. **General percent guidelines:**

- *5% is low, while*
- **20% is high**

Limit fats (particularly saturated and trans), cholesterol, sodium, and sugar to avoid chronic diseases. **General guidelines for calories:**

- *100 is moderate, while*
- **400 is considered high**

## One or Two? Serving Size Matters

**Watch total calories based on how MANY servings you eat.** For example, if one serving of macaroni and cheese is one cup (250 total calories), then two servings is two cups (500 calories). To offset this double portion, you would need to eat less during the day and exercise more.



## Other Food Label Tips

- When comparing food products, **make sure serving sizes are similar:** cups to cups, grams to grams.
- Compare **same categories:** low-fat to low-fat, fat-free to fat-free.
- Ingredients on labels are listed from the largest (or highest) amount to the smallest (or lowest) amount. **Make sure the healthiest ingredients are highest on list** while other ingredients like sodium and sugars are lowest. *Make sure the healthiest ingredients are listed FIRST.*
- Whenever possible, choose food which is the **least PROCESSED**, like canned beans, and has the least ingredients. The **more processed** a food is, like cakes and cookies, the **more ingredients** it will have on the label.

EATING HEALTHY helps prevent or manage such diseases as type 2 diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, certain cancers, and bone loss.

# Physical Activity Matters

## Losing Weight Makes A Big Difference

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says, “**Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health.**”

If you’re overweight, every pound you lose can improve your health.

Everyone can improve their health through regular physical activity no matter their age, ethnicity, shape, or size. **The benefits of exercise far outweigh any health risks.**



### Some benefits of exercise:

- **Helps reduce** risk factors for type 2 diabetes, colon and breast cancer, and other diseases like stroke and heart diseases.
- **Reduces** obesity and **helps** control weight.
- **Increases** your stamina and muscle strength and **improves** your balance.
- **Enhances** your mood, **gives** you more energy, and can **boost** your immune system.
- **Improves** your learning ability and memory and **may prevent or delay** Alzheimer’s disease.
- **Helps build** muscle and bone tissue and **prevent** osteoporosis.

### Physical Activity: Why is a Balanced Fitness Program So Important?

Through regular exercise, your blood pressure, blood sugars, and cholesterol can be lowered. **It will reduce your chances of getting diabetes and can reverse prediabetes.**

A balanced fitness program includes **aerobic** (for endurance), **muscle strengthening** (for resistance), and **stretching exercises** (for flexibility and balance). Activities can range from brisk walking (aerobic), to lifting weights (muscle and bone strengthening), and yoga (flexibility).

Health benefits, like losing weight, are noticeable **when you exercise regularly.** Many activities, like walking, have no costs. The more physical activity you build

into your day, the healthier you will be. **Frequency is the most important factor for improving your physical fitness.**

**Before You Begin.** **Speak with your doctor(s) if you have been inactive, have health issues, or experienced any of the following:** chest, neck, or arm pain, diagnosed heart condition, shortness of breath or dizziness, joint or bone problems, diabetes or high blood pressure.

**First Steps.** Tips for creating a fitness program: Create an exercise plan with realistic, achievable, and measurable goals.

- **Choose activities you enjoy**, like walking or gardening, and stick with them.
- **Commit** to a new lifestyle and include exercise as part of your daily routine.
- **Break activities up** into smaller units (10-15 minutes, twice a day), if this is easier.

For adults over age 40, **a weekly minimum of 150 minutes (or 30 minutes, five days a week)** is recommended for noticeable health benefits. **Exercise is also proven to reduce chronic pain over time.** Physical exercise is an important part of wellness, along with good nutrition and enough rest.

**Remember, it's never too late to start exercising.**



## WHY Quality Sleep Matters

**SLEEPING HEALTHY** means getting the right **quality** as well as **quantity** of sleep you need. **Both aspects of sleep affect wellness.**

Sleep allows the mind to process the day's information. It also helps body tissues and cells to be restored. Research shows that **chronic lack of sleep increases risk of many health disorders, including: diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, depression, and obesity.**

**What Is Sleep?** Sleep is a complex and dynamic process when the brain performs restorative biological functions for your body. Getting quality sleep is critical to survival. About one-third of our time is spent sleeping. **Adults need, on average, 8 hours of sleep per night.**

There are two basic types of sleep: **1) non-REM** (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep and **2) REM sleep.** **You need both types of sleep**

**for memory function.** If you have persistently poor sleep which continues for a month or more, check with your doctor and behavioral health providers.



## How Smoking Affects You

**SMOKING is NOT good for your health.** In fact, smoking is an addiction, and it is the single leading cause of **preventable death and disease** in the United States.

**Why Quit Smoking?** There may be many reasons why you started smoking, but cigarettes contain **nicotine, a highly addictive drug,** that often leads to tobacco dependency. Cigarettes contain hundreds of chemicals, many that may be harmful. Research shows that smoking **increases risks of many health disorders, including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and lung cancer.**

So, the sooner you quit smoking, the better.



**healthy lung (left) vs.  
smoking lung (right).**

**While it may be one of the hardest things you do, it could be one of the most rewarding.** Before you quit smoking, you need to know why you are stopping. Once you quit, you will have immediate health benefits. Within 20 minutes your heart rate and blood pressure drop, while in 12 hours your carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. **After a month, quitting smoking breaks the cycle of addiction by rewiring your brain.**

**REMEMBER, it is never too late to quit smoking.**

**Before you consider major health changes, please speak with your health providers.**

For more information on all the health topics previously discussed, please visit:

**[www.northcarenetwork.org/customer-service.html](http://www.northcarenetwork.org/customer-service.html)**

Scroll down the page until you see **Integrated Care Educational Material**  
and relevant healthy-living information.

## **Reference Sources**

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