

HEALTHY LIVING CHRONICLES

Prediabetes Facts



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 30 percent of adult Americans may have prediabetes. Even more surprising, the CDC estimates that 90 percent of people who have prediabetes do not know that they have it. **Irene Irby, NP, Doctors Community Practices at Riverdale, educates us about this condition.**

Let's Start with a Brief Description of Diabetes

Our bodies get sugar or glucose from the foods we eat. Glucose travels through our bloodstream and then enters cells. As part of this process, the hormone insulin helps the body turn glucose into energy.

People who have type 2 diabetes do not produce enough insulin or are unable to use it effectively. So, increased levels of glucose remain in the blood stream (high blood sugar). Too much glucose in the blood can cause problems with the kidneys, eyes, circulatory system and nervous system. This condition can also increase the risk of stroke, heart disease and amputation.

So, What's Prediabetes?

Also called "borderline diabetes," prediabetes means that you have unusually high blood sugar levels, but not elevated enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. People who have prediabetes are at an increased risk for developing diabetes.

For those who have prediabetes, poor insulin regulation can begin to damage the body. Without treatment, most people who have prediabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within ten years. Yet, prediabetes has no symptoms—so how can you know if you have this condition?

Prediabetes can be diagnosed with a simple blood test. The American Diabetes Association suggests that adults who are overweight and have one or more additional risk factors talk to their doctors about getting tested for prediabetes.

Being overweight or having other risk factors does not mean you will definitely develop prediabetes. Instead, it just highlights that you are at an increased risk. Other risk factors include:

- ✦ Age 45 or older (prediabetes is possible at any age, but is most common among people ages 45+)
- ✦ Sibling or parent who has type 2 diabetes
- ✦ Exercising infrequently
- ✦ Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
- ✦ High blood pressure
- ✦ African American, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic or Pacific Islander
- ✦ History of gestational diabetes (type of diabetes sometimes developed in women during pregnancy)

Prediabetes is treatable. Losing weight, increasing physical activity and making dietary changes can dramatically lower the risk of this condition progressing into type 2 diabetes.

Talk with your primary care physician if you are concerned about your risk of prediabetes. If you need help managing your prediabetes or diabetes, call one of our Doctors Community Practices offices. We have an experienced and compassionate team of diabetes specialists. You can also visit us at DCHdiabetes.org.

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Contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment.

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