Teladoc HEALTH | Western Michigan University

Diabetes explained: How type 1, type 2 and prediabetes compare



Diabetes—type 1 and type 2 diabetes and prediabetes—affects almost half the U.S. population. Over 40 million people have diabetes.[1] An additional 115 million adults have prediabetes.[1] What's worse, about 11 million adults are living with this disease but are undiagnosed.[1]

With numbers this large, it's safe to say diabetes is something to be concerned about.

What is diabetes?

At its core, diabetes is a disease about blood sugar (glucose). Your body uses glucose (mainly from carbohydrates) as a quick source of energy when you eat or drink it. For glucose to be useful for your whole body, insulin gets involved. When you have diabetes, your pancreas doesn't make enough insulin or does not respond to it properly. This raises the level of glucose in your bloodstream. Over time, high blood glucose levels can damage your kidneys, organs, heart and blood vessels, nerves, eyes and more.[2]



Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease, usually diagnosed in childhood, but can develop at any age. Your antibodies attack insulin-producing cells, meaning that you can no longer make insulin on your own.[2]

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes and develops when the body does not produce enough insulin or cells become resistant to it. Type 2 diabetes is usually diagnosed in adults but can develop at any age.[2] Most cases of type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed through healthy lifestyle changes.

Prediabetes is the stage before type 2 diabetes.[2] Your glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for an official diagnosis.

What to look out for

The risk factors for type 2 diabetes and prediabetes include:[3]

1. A family history of type 2 diabetes
2. Being over age 45
3. Having high blood pressure
4. Being overweight, especially in the mid-section
5. Having elevated cholesterol
6. Not being physically active
7. Having had gestational diabetes

Your care provider may use one or all of the following tests to monitor how well your body is using glucose:

	NORMAL	PREDIABETES	DIABETES
Fasting glucose test This measures your blood sugar after you have nothing to eat or drink except water for at least eight hours.	**99** mg/dL or lower	**100-125** mg/dL	**126** mg/dL or higher [4]
Random blood glucose test This is similar to a fasting glucose test but measures blood sugar at any time.			**200** mg/dL or higher [4]
Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) This measures your average blood sugar level over the past two to three months.	**5.6%** or lower	**5.7-6.4%**	**6.5%** or higher [4]

How can you prevent diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes and prediabetes can often be prevented or delayed by making healthy choices.[3]

1. **Maintain a healthy weight.** If weight loss is recommended, losing just 5-7% of your current weight can help.
2. **Eat balanced meals.** Build your plate with 50% fruit and non-starchy veggies (like carrots, broccoli or kale), 25% lean protein (like chicken or fish), and 25% carbs (like whole grains, beans and legumes).
3. **Stay active.** Aim for 150 minutes of moderate activity a week. That's just 30 minutes, 5 times a week.
4. **Stand up.** When sitting for long periods, stand up every 30-60 minutes and move around.
5. **Manage stress.** Try techniques like mindfulness, meditation and relaxation to help keep stress at a minimum.
6. **Get your sleep.** Aim for the recommended 7-9 hours of sleep a night.

These changes can help your body's cells use blood sugar better. And could help you reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

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Before starting any new exercise routine, talk to your healthcare provider to make sure it's safe.

[1]https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/php/data-research/index.html
[2]https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/7104-diabetes
[3]https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention-type-2/prediabetes-prevent-type-2.html
Also, https://www.teladochealth.com/library/article/the-lowdown-on-prediabetes
https://www.teladochealth.com/library/article/how-to-recognize-and-manage-diabetes

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