

Diabetes prevention: 5 tips for taking control

Changing your lifestyle could be a big step toward diabetes prevention — and it's never too late to start. Consider these tips.

[By Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

When it comes to type 2 diabetes — the most common type of diabetes — prevention is very important. It's especially important to make diabetes prevention a priority if you're at increased risk of diabetes, such as if you're overweight or you have a family history of the disease or you have been diagnosed with prediabetes (also known as impaired fasting glucose).

Diabetes prevention is as basic as eating more healthfully, becoming more physically active and losing a few extra pounds. It's never too late to start. Making a few simple changes in your lifestyle now may help you avoid the serious health complications of diabetes in the future, such as nerve, kidney and heart damage. Consider these diabetes prevention tips from the American Diabetes Association.

1. Get more physical activity

There are many benefits to regular physical activity. Exercise can help you:

- Lose weight
- Lower your blood sugar
- Boost your sensitivity to insulin — which helps keep your blood sugar within a normal range

Research shows that aerobic exercise and resistance training can help control diabetes. The greatest benefit comes from a fitness program that includes both.

2. Get plenty of fiber

Fiber may help you:

- Reduce your risk of diabetes by improving your blood sugar control
- Lower your risk of heart disease
- Promote weight loss by helping you feel full

Foods high in fiber include fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains and nuts.

3. Go for whole grains

It's not clear why, but whole grains may reduce your risk of diabetes and help maintain blood sugar levels. Try to make at least half your grains whole grains.

Many foods made from whole grains come ready to eat, including various breads, pasta products and cereals. Look for the word "whole" on the package and among the first few items in the ingredient list.

4. Lose extra weight

If you're overweight, diabetes prevention may hinge on weight loss. Every pound you lose can improve your health, and you may be surprised by how much. Participants in one large study who lost a modest amount of weight — around 7 percent of initial body weight — and exercised regularly reduced the risk of developing diabetes by almost 60 percent.

5. Skip fad diets and just make healthier choices

Low-carb diets, the glycemic index diet or other fad diets may help you lose weight at first. But their effectiveness at preventing diabetes and their long-term effects aren't known. And by excluding or strictly limiting a particular food group, you may be giving up essential nutrients and often craving such foods. Instead, make variety and portion control part of your healthy-eating plan.