

# Are You On The Road To Developing Diabetes?

Choose  
**HEALTH!**



Should you be concerned about becoming diabetic? You bet! Diabetes is a very serious illness. It is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States. People who have diabetes are at a greater risk for heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, and blood vessel disease that leads to loss of limbs. We have also now learned that some of this damage to the body actually happens during a pre-diabetic phase. It has been estimated that nearly 16 million people in this country have pre-diabetes. And why is that important? **Most people with pre-diabetes will go on to develop full-blown diabetes within 10 years.**

## What is pre-diabetes?

Pre-diabetes is having a blood sugar that is higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be in the range to be diagnosed as diabetic.

## What are the symptoms?

Most people with pre-diabetes usually have no symptoms.

## How do I find out if I have pre-diabetes?

Talk with your healthcare provider. They will determine if you are at risk and then do a blood test to check your blood sugar level. You must be fasting 12 hours for the test. The results of the test will determine if you have pre-diabetes.

## Who is at risk for this condition?

In general, people 45 and older who are overweight and lack physical activity are at the greatest risk for pre-diabetes. Other risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol or triglycerides, gestational diabetes or delivery of a baby nine pounds or more, or a family history of diabetes. Certain ethnic groups such as African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and Pacific Islanders have a greater risk for developing pre-diabetes, too.

## Is there anything that I can do to help prevent diabetes?

The truth is there is much you can do! The American Diabetic Association says that people with pre-diabetes can cut their risk of getting diabetes by making positive changes in their diet and becoming more physically active. One study showed that a 5-10% decrease in body weight



along with 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity could reduce the risk of getting diabetes by almost 60%! For some people, these lifestyle adjustments could actually bring their blood sugars back down to a normal range.

## **How do I start?**

Eat a healthy and balanced diet with a variety of fruits and vegetables. Limit the amount of fats and sweets you eat. Also, limit your food portion size. Make physical activity a part of your daily routine. Throw out the remote. Park farther away from your destination. Walking is one of the best ways to get started with increasing physical activity.

**Talk with your healthcare provider** about advice concerning an exercise program. If your healthcare provider believes you need supervision during exercise, think about joining a medical rehabilitation program like the one at OSF Saint Francis RiverPlex. We offer education about safe exercise, diet, and healthy lifestyle adjustments along with medical personnel on site should an emergency arise. Call 282-1600 for more information on ways to decrease your risk for pre-diabetes and improve your well- being.

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