# Prediabetes

## What You Need to Know

### Did you know that if you are 45 years old or older, overweight, and inactive, you may have prediabetes?

### What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes means the amount of glucose, also called sugar, in your blood is higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes. Glucose is a form of sugar your body uses for energy. Too much glucose in your blood can damage your body over time. If you have prediabetes, also called impaired fasting glucose (IFG) or impaired glucose tolerance (IGT), you are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

### How do I know if I have prediabetes?

Most people with prediabetes don't have any symptoms. Your doctor can test your blood to find out if your blood glucose levels are higher than normal.

### Who should be tested for prediabetes?

If you are 45 years old or older, your doctor may recommend that you be tested for prediabetes, especially if you are overweight. Being overweight is a key contributor, along with inactivity, to prediabetes. If your body mass index (BMI) is higher than 25, you are overweight. BMI is a measure of your weight relative to your height. If you're not sure if you are overweight, ask your doctor.

Even if you are younger than 45, consider getting tested for prediabetes if you are overweight and

- are physically inactive
- have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- have high blood pressure or high cholesterol—blood fat
- have abnormal levels of HDL, or good, cholesterol or triglycerides—another type of blood fat
- had gestational diabetes—diabetes that develops only during pregnancy—or gave birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- are African American, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, or Pacific Islander American
- have polycystic ovary syndrome, also called PCOS
- have a dark, velvety rash around your neck or armpits
- have blood vessel problems affecting your heart, brain, or legs

If your test results are normal, you should be retested in 3 years. If you have prediabetes, ask your doctor if you should be tested again in 1 year.

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## What can I do about prediabetes?

Losing weight—at least 5 to 10 percent of your starting weight—can prevent or delay diabetes or even reverse prediabetes. That's 10 to 20 pounds for someone who weighs 200 pounds. You can lose weight by cutting the amount of calories and fat you consume and by being physically active at least 30 to 60 minutes every day. Physical activity also helps your body use the hormone insulin properly. Your body needs insulin to use glucose for energy.

Medicine can help control the amount of glucose in your blood. Ask your doctor if medicine to control glucose is right for you.

The National Diabetes Education Program's Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent Type 2 Diabetes campaign has more information about preventing diabetes at *www.ndep.nih.gov*.

## Where can I get more information about prediabetes?

**National Diabetes Education Program**
1 Diabetes Way
Bethesda, MD 20814–9692
Phone: 1–888–693–NDEP (1–888–693–6337)
TTY: 1–866–569–1162
Fax: 703–738–4929
Email: ndep@mail.nih.gov
Internet: www.ndep.nih.gov
www.yourdiabetesinfo.org

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Email: ndic@info.niddk.nih.gov
Internet: www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

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The NIDDK Awareness and Prevention Series is designed to make you ask yourself, "Could this be me or someone I care for?" So take a closer look. Additional information on this topic and other titles in the series is available through the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse or on the Internet at *www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov.*

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