

# ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN



**NOVEMBER 2024**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC

# KNOW YOUR DIABETES RISKS



**M**ore than 1 in 3 adults in the United States have prediabetes — and many may not even know it. National Diabetes Month, in November, is a time to raise awareness about diabetes as a health concern and encourage people to take charge of their health.

Diabetes is a long-lasting, or chronic, disease that affects how your body turns the food you eat into energy. Your body breaks down most of the food you eat into sugar, or glucose. The increase in sugar tells your pancreas to release insulin. Insulin is needed for the cells in your body to be able to use the sugar as energy. If you have diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin or can't use it as well as it should. Then, too much sugar stays in your bloodstream instead of becoming energy and being used. Over time, the build-up of sugar in your blood can cause serious health problems like heart disease, kidney damage, and vision loss.

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There are many potential risk factors for diabetes. For type 1 diabetes, the most common risk factors are family history of diabetes and age. Type 1 diabetes doesn't usually happen because of lifestyle factors, but instead is associated with an immune system response that most often occurs in young children or teens. For type 2 diabetes, the following are common risk factors:

- Overweight or obesity
- 45 or older
- A parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes
- Physically active less than three times a week
- Have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), now called metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD)
- Had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or given birth to a baby who weighed more than 9 pounds

There is no cure for diabetes, but you can manage prediabetes and can even reverse it with the right medical care and lifestyle choices. That is why it is so important to know the signs and risk factors and to receive a diagnosis and treatment plan quickly. You can't change some risk factors like age and family medical history. However, there

are some things you can do to reduce your risk of prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, or gestational diabetes. Some behavior changes to lower your risk include:

- Increasing physical activity,
- Eating a healthy diet, and
- Losing weight if you are overweight.

Small, gradual changes can make a big difference in lowering your risk of prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, or gestational diabetes, and improving your overall health and wellness. It's never too late or too early to get started.

If you have been diagnosed with prediabetes or believe you have multiple risk factors listed above, talk with your doctor about what you should be doing to decrease your risk of developing diabetes and increase your overall health.

**REFERENCE:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/about>

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