

# Prediabetes

## What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes is a term that refers to blood glucose (sugar) levels that are above the normal range but are not as high as levels in Type 2 Diabetes. People who have prediabetes are at significantly more risk of developing diabetes.

Our body needs food and nutrients for energy and to keep healthy. Starchy and sugary foods provide our bodies with the nutrient carbohydrate. When we eat these carbohydrate containing foods they are broken down in digestion and release glucose into the blood stream. The body uses this glucose to make energy. In order for the body to make energy from glucose a hormone called insulin, which is released from an organ in the body called the pancreas, is needed. Insulin acts like a key opening up the body's cells to allow glucose to enter in and be converted into energy.

In prediabetes either people are not producing enough insulin, the insulin is not working properly (insulin resistance), or a combination of the two. If someone is overweight this can increase their insulin resistance, making it difficult for their body to cope with glucose released from carbohydrate foods.

## Diet and Lifestyle

- people with raised blood glucose levels can reduce their risk of Type 2 Diabetes by losing weight (if overweight), eating a healthy balanced diet, and keeping active
- to stay healthy it is also important to manage stress, get enough sleep and stop smoking

## Aim for a healthy weight

Weight carried around the middle is linked with greater insulin resistance which increases the risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. You are at increased risk if your waist measurement is:

- **94cm (37ins) or more for men**
- **80cm (31.5ins) or more for women**

To help manage weight try:

- using a smaller plate
- filling half your plate with vegetables/salad
- avoid having a second helping

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To take care with portions aim for:

- a fist size portion of carbohydrate, a palm size portion of meat/fish or poultry
- a cupped-handful of fruit, top of your thumb size of oil or fat spread.
- filling up on plenty of vegetables/salad **Be more active**

Aim to build up the amount of physical activity/exercise that you do gradually. Regular activity has many health benefits including improving blood glucose levels, blood pressure, circulation and cholesterol (blood fat) levels.

## Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are starches and sugars. Starchy foods (eg bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, cereals), natural sugar (eg fruit, milk, yogurt) or free sugars (eg sweets, sugary drinks, fruit juice, chocolate, jams, biscuits, cakes) break down and release the sugar glucose into the blood stream. It is often helpful to spread the carbohydrate that you eat over the day to keep blood glucose levels more steady. The quantity of carbohydrate that you eat is the main dietary factor affecting your blood glucose levels and you may benefit from reducing the amount of carbohydrate in your diet.

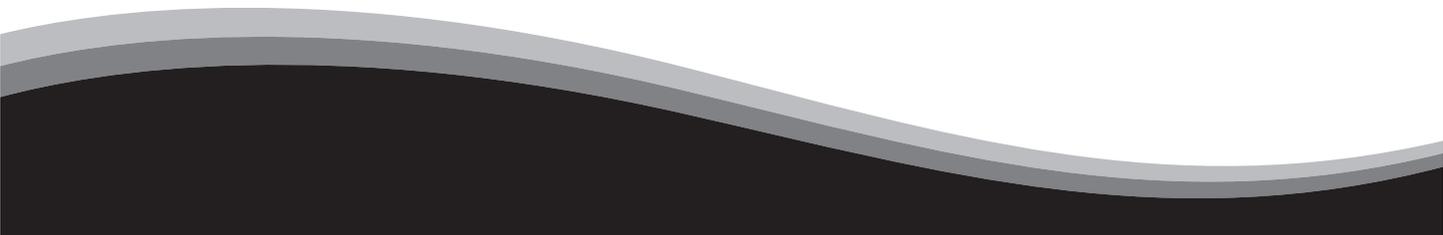
- higher fibre and whole grain starchy foods, beans, pulses, fruit and dairy foods provide important nutrients such as fibre, vitamins and minerals. They can help you feel fuller for longer and can be beneficial for bowel health
- however large portions will raise blood glucose levels too high so take care with portion sizes
- limit food/drinks with added sugars. Although they do not have to be banned completely - they are low in nutrients but will still raise blood glucose levels and can contribute to weight gain. Try to choose sugar free drinks and keep foods containing sugar to just occasionally. Artificial sweeteners can be used

## Vegetables and fruit

Aim for at least five portions of vegetables and fruits each day (a portion is approximately 1 handful or 80g). Vegetables are lower in carbohydrate and calories than fruit but still high in fibre, vitamins and minerals, so aim to get most of your portions from vegetables or salad. Fruits are high in natural sugars so it is important to spread the portions out throughout the day and have fruit in place of less nutritious sweet foods such as biscuits/cakes/puddings.

## Fats

Limit processed foods which are high in fat but low in nutritional value eg cakes, chocolates, pastries, biscuits, deep fried takeaway foods. Try Heart healthy oils which are found in the Mediterranean style diet: olive oil, rapeseed oil, nuts, seeds, oily fish. Oily fish such as fresh/tinned/frozen salmon, mackerel, trout, herring, pilchards and sardines, contain heart-healthy omega-3 fats. Aim for 2 portions per week.



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## Dairy and alternatives

Aim to include 3 servings of milk, yoghurt, cheese or the calcium enriched non-dairy alternatives (eg soya/rice/nut milks) each day to ensure you have enough calcium in your diet.

## Protein

Meat, fish, eggs, beans/pulses, soya/Quorn/tofu provide the body with protein which is important for growth and repair. Include 2-3 servings (a serving is palm sized) each day.

## Salt

Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. A lot of the salt in our diet comes from ready-made, processed foods. Try to reduce the level of salt in your diet by using fewer tinned, pre-packaged and convenience foods, especially ready meals, soups, sauces, crisps and cured meats. Check food labels to choose options that are lower in salt.

## Alcohol

If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation

No more than 14 units per week (a standard pint of beer/lager/cider =2 units, 1 small (125ml) glass of wine = 1 ½ units, 1 single (25ml) spirits = 1 unit).

Try to have some alcohol free days each week.

## Fluids

Have 8-10 glasses of fluid daily. Water is the best drink, but tea, herbal teas, coffee, no added sugar squash and diet fizzy drinks can all count towards the 8-10 glasses. Alcohol does not have to be avoided but should be consumed in moderation.

If you would like this information in another format, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email [wcnt.yourexp@nhs.net](mailto:wcnt.yourexp@nhs.net)

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