

Understanding Pre-Diabetes



What is Pre-diabetes?

The big medical answer is this: "Pre-diabetes" is a point at which the body's metabolic functioning is between "normal" and "diabetes."

What does this mean for you? It means that if you have been told you have pre-diabetes, you have a blood sugar (glucose) level that is higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

Pre-diabetes affects nearly 16 million Americans and increases their risk of Type 2 diabetes in addition to boosting their risk of heart disease.

Studies have shown that most people with pre-diabetes go on to develop Type 2 diabetes within 10 years. Excess weight and other genetic factors tend to contribute to pre-diabetes, and studies suggest that weight loss and increased physical activity can prevent or delay diabetes. Losing 5 to 7 percent of total body weight—which is about 10 to 15 pounds for someone who weighs 200 pounds — by making modest changes in diet and level of physical activity can potentially reverse pre-diabetes and lower a person's risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

People who have pre-diabetes are at risk for heart attack, stroke and developing full-on diabetes.

How Is Blood Sugar (Glucose) Measured?

Impaired Fasting Glucose Test: A fasting glucose test measures your blood sugar after you have gone overnight without eating. This test is most reliable when done in the morning. Fasting glucose levels of 100 to 125 mg/dL (milligrams per deciliter of blood) are considered above normal but not high enough to be called diabetes. This condition is called pre-diabetes or impaired fasting glucose (IFG), and it suggests that the person has probably had insulin resistance for some time. IFG is considered a pre-diabetic state, meaning that you are more likely to develop diabetes but do not have it yet.

Impaired Glucose Tolerance Test: A glucose tolerance test measures your blood sugar after an overnight fast and 2 hours after you drink a sweet liquid provided by the doctor or laboratory. If your blood glucose falls between 140 and 199 mg/dL 2 hours after drinking the liquid, your glucose tolerance is above normal but not high enough for diabetes. This condition, also a form of pre-diabetes, is called impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) and, like IFG, it points toward a history of insulin resistance and a risk for developing diabetes.

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Sources:

- National Institutes of Health - <http://health.nih.gov/>
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases - <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/>
- World Health Organization - <http://www.who.int/>



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