

# Lifestyle Steps to Help Improve Blood Sugar

Pre-diabetes is diagnosed when your blood sugar is greater than 100 mg/dl but less than 126 mg/dl. Diabetes is when your blood sugar is greater than 126 mg/dl when fasting or greater than 200 mg/dl after a meal.

	Fasting	2-Hours after meals
Normal	99 mg/dl or lower	< 140 mg/dl
Pre-diabetes	100-125 mg/dl	>141-199 mg/dl
Diabetes	>126 mg/dl	>200 mg/dl

The diagnosis of pre-diabetes often happens 10 years before a person develops diabetes. Research has shown that those with pre-diabetes who make small, consistent changes to their diet and activity levels may prevent or delay the onset of diabetes in more than 58% of people at risk!

## ***What to change first?***

*Healthful eating is good for everyone! And everyone's needs, food preferences, lifestyle, culture, budget is different, so consult with a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist for individualized, sustainable and realistic advice.*

### **These ideas may help you eat more healthfully:**

- Regular meals/ snacks if needed (chaotic eating may lead to poor blood sugar control)
- Include more vegetables at mealtimes such as

*Asparagus*

*Bean Sprouts*

*Beans (green, waxed, Italian, snap)*

*Beets,*

*Broccoli*

*Cabbage*

*Carrots*

*Eggplant*

*Leafy greens and Lettuces*

*Mushrooms*

*Okra, onions*

*Pea pods or snow peas*

*Peppers*

*Spinach*

*Squash (summer, crook neck, zucchini)*

*Spaghetti Squash*

*Tomato*

Fresh, frozen and canned are all nutritious! Look for "no added salt" varieties

- Eat less trans/ saturated fat.

Fat does not cause a person's blood sugars to rise directly but it may contribute to weight gain and elevated cholesterol level. High fat foods from animals include butter, processed meats, cheeses and foods fried in lard. Additionally, foods that are described as "flaky, buttery, creamy, or rich" are often high in fat. Red or processed meats, cream and cheese are high in fat. If possible, cut down on how often or how much you eat these foods.

- Be mindful of portions of starchy foods at each meal. Choose whole grain, and higher fiber choices when possible. Fiber rich foods have many health benefits! Some high fiber examples include:

*100% whole wheat bread  
/ tortillas*

*Brown Rice/ Quinoa*

*Oatmeal, Bran Cereals*

*Canned/ dried beans*

*Peas*

*Potatoes (sweet & white)*

*Winter Squash*

*Corn*

- Stay well hydrated

Beverages such as fancy coffee drinks and regular soda are high in calories and carbohydrates. Reducing your intake on calorie containing beverages such as soda, juice, and flavored sports drinks is a great way to save calories, reduce dental problems and lower your blood sugar level. If you do not enjoy the taste of water, there are many sugar free substitutes and water flavorings available.

### **Stay as active as you are able**

Increasing your activity is also an important step you can take to prevent developing diabetes. In general, increasing any activity from housework to walking will have some benefit. Breaking up sitting (for example, 3 minutes of moving for every 30 minutes of sitting) can be very beneficial.

Activity helps us better metabolize sugar in your blood, which is called **glucose**. Activity can also benefit blood pressure, blood cholesterol, triglycerides, builds muscles, lifts mood, raises your metabolism and benefits weight management

### **Schedule regular health checks/screenings**

When diagnosed with diabetes or prediabetes it is important that you follow up with your provider as recommended for regular monitoring, physical exams and screenings (such as eye and foot exams), as well as important immunizations such as the flu/pneumonia vaccines.

Remember the importance of oral / dental health: regular cleanings, dental exams and daily dental hygiene as recommended by your dentist and dental hygienist also is shown to improve blood sugar control, heart health and nutrition status.

**Contact your medical team if you notice any changes in the following:**

Increased urination, blurry vision, excessive dry skin, sleepiness after meals, unintentional weight loss and changes in appetite. Be sure to also discuss any difficulty with taking or accessing prescribed medications.

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Janice has been working in nutrition support and diabetes management since 1983 and is available for online virtual and telephonic consultations by appointment.

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