



# Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

## Overview

Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects how your body turns food into energy. The rate of diabetes is rising throughout the United States and this includes our Navy and Marine Corps. People with diabetes are more prone to heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, or loss of toes, feet or legs. Know your risks and take strides to decrease your chances. The earlier the better!

## Signs and symptoms

Before a person is diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, they almost always have prediabetes. There are no clear symptoms of prediabetes, so you may have it and not know it. Without positive lifestyle changes, many people with prediabetes could develop type 2 diabetes within the next 5 years. Your doctor can perform a simple blood test to find out if you have either condition.

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*“Without positive lifestyle changes, many people with prediabetes could develop type 2 diabetes within 5 years.”*

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## Risk Test

1. How old are you	<40 (0 points) 50-59 (2 points)	40-49 (1point) >60 (3 points)	
2. Are you a man or a woman?	Man (1 point)	Woman (0 points)	
3. If you are a woman, have you ever been diagnosed with gestational diabetes?	Yes (1 point)	No (0 points)	
4. Do you have a mother, father, sister, or brother with diabetes?	Yes (1 point)	No (0 points)	
5. Have you ever been diagnosed with high blood pressure?	Yes (1 point)	No (0 points)	
6. Are you physically active?	Yes (0 points)	No (1 point)	
7. What is your weight category?	Overweight (1 point) Obese (2 points) morbidly obese (3 Points)		
	Total		

## Scoring

If you scored 5 or higher, you are at increased risk for having prediabetes and are at high risk for type 2 diabetes. Only your doctor can tell you for sure if you have either of these.



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## Early Intervention

Diabetes is currently the seventh leading cause of death in the United States – and studies show that deaths related to diabetes may be under reported! Fortunately, lifestyle changes will make a bigger difference than any medication for preventing diabetes.

## Weight Matters

People who are overweight – especially if they have excess belly fat – are more likely to have insulin resistance, which is a major risk for diabetes. Losing just 5-7% body fat (10-14 pounds in a 200 pound person) will make a significant difference. Ideas to get you started are:

- Drink more water and fewer sugary drinks (this includes fruit juices).
- Eat more vegetables and fruit (avoid fruit juices).
- Eat slowly – it takes at least 20 minutes to start feeling full.
- Eat at the dinner table, not in front of the TV or computer.
- Aim for at least 25 grams of fiber each day.
- Choose lean meats – chicken, fish, etc.
- Pay attention to food portions.
- Choose whole grains when possible.
- Treats allowed occasionally – watch portions very closely!

## Activity Matters

Being active helps the body use insulin better, decreasing insulin resistance and allowing the body to work more efficiently. Physical activity also helps control blood pressure and boost mental health. Ideas to get started:

- Walk: park further away, make a date with a friend, take meetings outside
- Aim for more than 30 minutes 5 times per week.
- Check out a military gym. There are many classes and resources there!
- Recess is for everyone! Make your activity fun. Move more!

## Resource

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Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center. Size Up Your Servings  
[https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-rograms/hp-toolbox/HPW\\_WeightManagement\\_SizeUpYourServings.pdf](https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/Documents/health-promotion-wellness/general-tools-and-rograms/hp-toolbox/HPW_WeightManagement_SizeUpYourServings.pdf)

## Reference

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lifestyle-program/about-prediabetes.html>  
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