

Just What is Pre-diabetes?
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Diabetes mellitus is a disorder of metabolism in which people have problems converting food to energy. It is the leading cause of adult blindness, kidney failure and non-traumatic amputations, and a major cause of heart disease and stroke. It is estimated that presently there are 17 million Americans who have diabetes and probably 16 million more who may have "pre-diabetes." This is a new name for "impaired glucose tolerance," which is an early indicator of developing diabetes. In the past, some physicians would refer to this as borderline diabetes. Those who have pre-diabetes probably don't experience any symptoms, but their blood glucose levels are higher than normal. If nothing is done to reduce these levels, diabetes will most likely develop within 10 years. The US Department of Health and Human Services and the American Diabetes Association are encouraging people to be tested for this pre-diabetic condition.

The testing recommendations are:

- Testing everyone 45 years of age and older, especially if overweight;
- Testing younger adults (even adolescents) if they have risk factors, such as obesity, low HDL (good) cholesterol and high triglycerides, high blood pressure, family history of diabetes, history of diabetes developed during pregnancy, or belong to a racial minority group at increased risk for type 2 diabetes;
- Repeat testing every 3 years if the test results are normal; and,
- For those who have high glucose test results, encourage preventive measures such as walking 30 minutes, 5 days a week and losing weight which can significantly reduce the risk.

If you take action to control your blood glucose when you have pre-diabetes, you may delay or prevent type 2 diabetes from ever developing. Testing has shown that people who have increased their activity levels as recommended, coupled with a 5-10% reduction in body weight, produced a 58% reduction in diabetes.

If you are overweight or have any of the risk factors for diabetes, (low HDL cholesterol and high triglycerides, high blood pressure, family history of diabetes, history of diabetes developed during pregnancy, or belong to a racial minority group at increased risk for type 2 diabetes) **take control** of your health, and at your next doctor's appointment ASK about having your glucose levels checked.