

Prediabetes: Understanding the warning signs and preventative strategies

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DESCRIPTION

Prediabetes is a critical health condition characterized by elevated blood glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be classified as diabetes. It serves as an early warning sign that an individual is at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Understanding prediabetes, its risk factors, symptoms, and preventive measures is essential for taking proactive steps towards better health and potentially reversing the condition. Prediabetes is a metabolic state where blood sugar levels are elevated but not high enough to meet the criteria for diabetes. It is a precursor to type 2 diabetes and can be diagnosed through several tests. Measures blood sugar levels after an overnight fast. A result between 100 mg/dL and 125 mg/dL (5.6 mmol/L to 6.9 mmol/L) indicates prediabetes. Measures blood sugar levels after fasting and two hours after consuming a sugary drink. A two-hour level between 140 mg/dL and 199 mg/dL (7.8 mmol/L to 11.0 mmol/L) indicates prediabetes. Reflects average blood sugar levels over the past two to three months. An A1c level between 5.7% and 6.4% suggests prediabetes. Excess body fat, particularly around the abdomen, is a major risk factor. Fat cells can lead to insulin resistance, where the body's cells do not respond effectively to insulin. Risk increases with age, especially after 45. However, prediabetes can also occur in younger individuals, particularly with lifestyle risk factors. A family history of diabetes increases the likelihood of developing prediabetes. Genetics play a role in insulin resistance and glucose metabolism. Lack of physical activity can contribute to weight gain and insulin resistance, increasing the risk of prediabetes. Diets high in processed foods, sugar, and unhealthy fats can lead to weight gain and insulin resistance. Certain ethnic groups, including African American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American populations, are at higher risk for prediabetes. Women with PCOS are at a higher risk for insulin resistance and prediabetes. Women who had gestational diabetes during pregnancy are at increased risk for developing prediabetes later in life. Prediabetes often develops without noticeable

symptoms, making it important to undergo regular screenings if you are at risk. Some people may experience. Frequent thirst and drinking more fluids than usual. Needing to urinate more often, particularly during the night. Feeling unusually tired and sluggish. Difficulty seeing clearly due to changes in fluid levels in the eyes. Areas of darkened skin, particularly in the neck or armpits, may be a sign of insulin resistance. Adopting a balanced diet rich in whole grains, lean proteins, vegetables, and fruits can help manage blood sugar levels. Reducing intake of processed foods, sugary snacks, and high-fat foods is essential. Engaging in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week, such as brisk walking, swimming, or cycling, helps improve insulin sensitivity and control blood sugar levels. Losing even a small amount of weight (5%-10% of body weight) can significantly reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and improve overall health. Routine check-ups and blood glucose monitoring can help track changes and assess the effectiveness of lifestyle interventions. In some cases, healthcare providers may prescribe medications like metformin to help manage blood glucose levels and prevent progression to type 2 diabetes, especially for individuals with additional risk factors. Managing stress through relaxation techniques, mindfulness, and adequate sleep is important for overall health and can impact blood glucose levels. Educating yourself about prediabetes and seeking support from healthcare professionals, dietitians, or support groups can provide guidance and motivation for making lifestyle changes.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has nothing to disclose and also state no conflict of interest in the submission of this manuscript.

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