

Take these small steps to manage diabetes

Nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes, and more than a quarter of them do not know it. Left untreated, diabetes can lead to serious problems such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, and loss of limbs.

An estimated 79 million adults have pre-diabetes, a condition that places them at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Even if you know what to do to improve your health, figuring out how to do it and fitting it into your daily routine can be a big challenge. Making changes in how you care for your health is a matter of trying and learning.

The National Diabetes Education Program suggests you make a plan and take small, but important steps to help you reach your goal:

- Think about what is important to you and your health.
- What changes are you willing and able to make (such as testing your blood glucose, exercising, planning diabetes-friendly meals and snacks)?
- Decide what steps will help you reach your health goals (such as talking with your doctor about your blood glucose goal, taking a tour of the grocery store with a diabetes educator, learning how to make healthier meals).
- Choose one goal to work on first. Start this week. Pick one change you can start to make right now.
- Don't give up. It's common to run into some problems along the way. If things don't go as planned, think about other ways to reach your goal.

