

Simple steps to prevent diabetes

The good news is that many cases of type 2 diabetes, which account for between 90 and 95% of all adult cases of the disease, can be prevented by leading a healthy lifestyle, according to the CDC. So whether you're flirting with pre-diabetes or just want to lower your risk, the American Diabetes Association suggests eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS ON HOW TO FIT HEALTHY EATING AND EXERCISE INTO YOUR BUSY DAY.

- **Sneak some exercise into your day.** Being physically fit can lower blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol by helping insulin work better. All of these factors help reduce your risk for diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. Plus, being in shape helps you feel better both physically and mentally.
- **Add exercise to your daily routine.** If you don't currently exercise on a regular basis, start with small amounts of physical activity. For instance, take a brisk 15-minute walk in the morning. Have a walking meeting with co-workers instead of meeting in a conference room.
- **Make exercise fun.** Any kind of physical activity is exercise. This includes doing yard work, dancing, or walking the dog. Choose a few activities you enjoy, and take steps to fit them into your schedule. Find a workout buddy to do a few laps around the neighborhood after dinner. Make bike riding or hiking regular family activities.
- **Choose foods with a low glycemic index.** The glycemic index is a measure of the effects of carbohydrates on blood sugar levels. These foods include white pasta, cookies, and crackers. They are typically made with processed white flour. When we eat these foods, it causes a spike in blood sugar. Eating these foods also tends to result in weight gain since they are often high in calories. Plus, they are often high in sodium and not very nutritious. Most Americans eat foods with a high glycemic index.
- **Cut back on your sugar intake.** If you eat a lot of sugar in your diet, try to reduce sugary foods and beverages. For example, instead of soda and juice, try seltzer or water. When the craving for a cookie or piece of cake hits, try a piece of fruit instead. Some studies have shown that the natural sugar in fruit can help decrease sugar cravings.
- **Incorporate more fresh fruits and vegetables into your diet.** Eating more fruits and vegetables keeps your blood pressure stable and gives you much-needed nutrients and fiber. Plus, most fruits and vegetables are low in fat and calories.
- **Choose healthy snacks.** Before having a high-sugar or high-fat snack, reach for a handful of nuts, some low-fat popcorn, or whole-wheat crackers. Keep healthy snacks on hand whether you are at home, at work or on the go.
- **Remember these tips when eating out.** Think of your plate as a pie chart. You should fill up half of your plate with vegetables, a fourth with protein, and a fourth with a starch or carbohydrate.

