



# PREDIABETES



All plans offered and underwritten by Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest.  
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## What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes is not diabetes. It means that your blood sugar levels are higher than they should be, but not high enough to be diagnosed with diabetes. Most people who get type 2 diabetes have prediabetes first.

The good news is that lifestyle changes can help you:

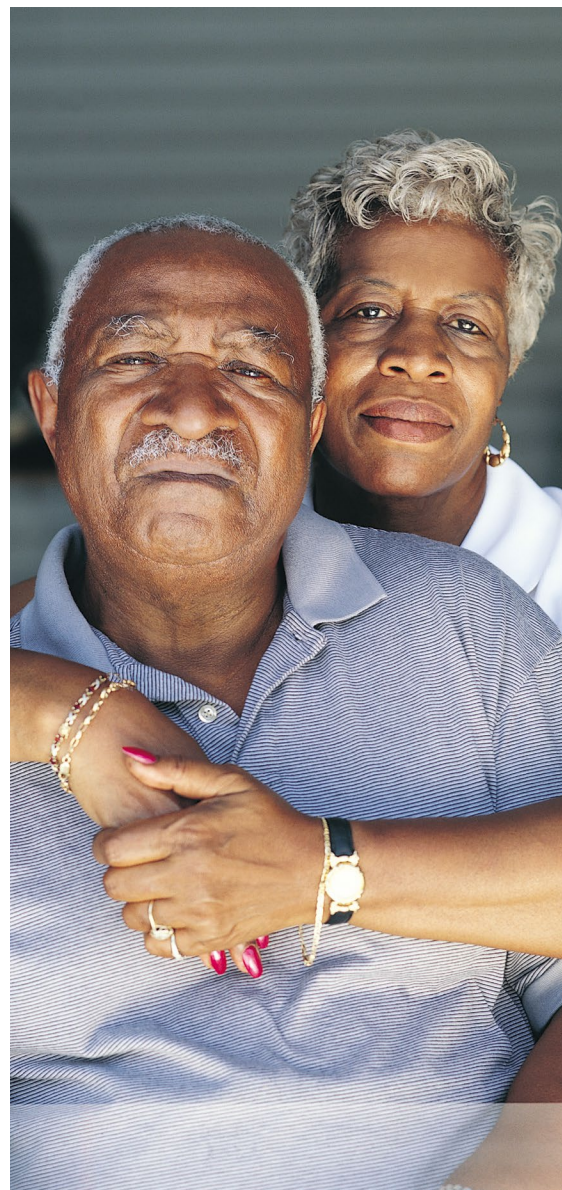
- Get your blood sugar back to normal.
- Protect your heart health.
- Avoid or delay diabetes.

## What is type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is when the pancreas can't make enough insulin and/or the body can't use insulin well. Insulin is a hormone that helps your body's cells use or store sugar (glucose) for energy.

Without insulin, the blood sugar can't get into the cells to do its work. It stays in the blood instead. This can cause high blood sugar levels.

Over time, high blood sugar can cause problems with the eyes, heart, blood vessels, nerves, and kidneys. High blood sugar also makes a person more likely to get sick or have infections.



### How is prediabetes diagnosed?

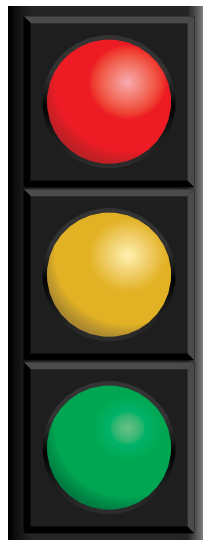
A blood test can tell you if you have prediabetes. You have prediabetes if the results of your hemoglobin HbA1c (or A1c) test are between 5.7 and 6.4%, or if the results of your fasting blood glucose test are between 100 and 125 milligrams per deciliter.

An A1c test measures your average blood sugar over the last 3 months. There are many factors that affect your daily blood sugar levels. They include illness, lack of sleep, hospitalization, stress, injury, alcohol, or smoking. A fasting blood glucose test tells you how much sugar is in your blood at one moment in time.

Prediabetes is kind of like a yellow traffic light. It warns you of a change that is coming, and gives you an opportunity to make decisions.

If your A1c is 6.3–6.4% and your BMI (body mass index) is over 30, you have a much higher risk of developing diabetes in the next few years.

Talk with your health care clinician about when to get another blood sugar test.



**Diabetes: HbA1c 6.5 or higher  
OR fasting blood sugar 126 and over**

**Prediabetes: HbA1c 5.7-6.4  
OR fasting blood sugar 100-125**

**Normal: HbA1c 5.6 or less  
OR fasting blood sugar 99 or less**



## Risk factors

There are several risk factors that can make some people more likely to develop prediabetes or type 2 diabetes.

Some of these factors cannot be changed, such as:

- Family history
- Being of African-American, Native American, Latino, Asian, or Pacific Islander heritage
- Age greater than 45
- History of gestational diabetes or delivering a baby weighing 9 pounds or more
- Having PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome)

Luckily, there are ways to reduce your risk through healthy lifestyle changes to improve factors such as:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Not enough physical activity
- Tobacco use.

## Symptoms

Most people with prediabetes don't have any symptoms.

But if you have prediabetes, you need to watch for signs of diabetes. These include:

- Fatigue.
- Feeling very thirsty.
- Urinating more often than usual.
- Feeling very hungry.
- Having blurred vision.
- Losing weight without trying.
- Tingling or numbness in your feet.





### How is it treated?

Studies have shown that people with prediabetes can reduce their chance of developing type 2 diabetes by up to 58 percent by:

- Eating a healthy diet.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Getting regular exercise.
- Managing stress.
- Getting enough sleep.
- Quitting tobacco, if you smoke or chew.
- Managing your blood pressure and cholesterol.

Don't worry if you can't get to your ideal body weight. Losing a little weight, even 10 to 15 pounds, can make a difference.

Some people benefit from using metformin, a blood sugar medication. Kaiser Permanente guidelines recommend adding metformin to your healthy lifestyle changes if your HbA1c is 6.3 or 6.4. Talk with your doctor about this option.

For more information on preventing diabetes, sign up for the prediabetes webinar. You can register at **[kp.org/appointments](https://kp.org/appointments)**. Click "Schedule appointment," then select Health and Wellness Education as the reason for the appointment. Follow the prompts and make your selections to finish registering. You also can register by calling 503-286-6816 or 1-866-301-3866, option 1. The webinar is a live session you participate in online.

You can learn more about prediabetes at **[kp.org/healthengagement/prediabetes](https://kp.org/healthengagement/prediabetes)**.



## Eating a healthy diet

Eating a healthy diet is important when you have prediabetes. Pay attention to when you eat, what you eat, and how much you eat.

Eat 3 meals and 1 or 2 snacks daily. Try not to skip meals or overeat at any meal.

Carbohydrate affects blood sugar more than other nutrients.

It is found in sugar and sweets, grains, fruit, starchy vegetables, and milk and yogurt.

It is not necessary to count carbohydrates if you don't want to.

One easy way to plan a healthy meal is shown here. Fill half your plate with low carbohydrate vegetables (such as broccoli, green beans, cauliflower, or carrots). One-quarter of the plate has a starch of some kind (whole grains, beans, sweet potatoes) and the remaining quarter has a lean protein (chicken, fish, tofu, lean beef).

Foods that are less processed are recommended as they are usually higher in fiber.

Talk with your doctor about healthy eating or a referral to see a registered dietitian to discuss an eating plan that will work for you. You also can get a personalized online program to help you create an action plan at [kp.org/healthylifestyles](http://kp.org/healthylifestyles). There are many ways to manage how much and what you eat.





Unprocessed carbohydrates (preferred)	Processed carbohydrates (limit or avoid)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Legumes – dried beans, split peas, lentils, soy.</li> <li>■ All vegetables.</li> <li>■ All fresh fruits.</li> <li>■ Whole grains (amaranth, barley, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, corn, millet, oatmeal, quinoa, rye, whole wheat).</li> <li>■ Pasta (whole grain preferred).</li> <li>■ 100 percent whole-wheat bread, rolls.</li> <li>■ 100 percent whole-wheat or rye crackers.</li> <li>■ Whole-grain cereals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sugar, honey, molasses, syrup.</li> <li>■ Soft drinks, other sweetened beverages.</li> <li>■ Candy.</li> <li>■ Cookies, cakes, pies, donuts, sweet rolls.</li> <li>■ Ice cream.</li> <li>■ Highly sweetened cereals.</li> <li>■ White-flour products (bread, rolls, pancakes, waffles, bagels, and crackers).</li> <li>■ Chips, pretzels.</li> <li>■ Fruit juices.</li> </ul>



## Getting regular physical activity

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine recommend getting at least 2½ hours (150 minutes) a week of moderate physical activity.

Aim for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. It can make a big difference in your health.

You can space these 30 minutes out over the course of the day. Try:

- Walking 10 minutes before work.
- Climbing stairs for 10 minutes at lunch.
- Dancing 10 minutes in the evening.

Increase the time and intensity of your physical activity as you are able.

You can swim, bike, walk, play with your kids in a park, or do other activities. Think about how you will make exercise more enjoyable this week. Be adventurous – try something new!



## Managing stress

Stress can be good when it helps you gear up for a challenge, such as a new job. But stress can wear your body down if it goes on too long. Stress can also increase your blood sugar.

Unmanaged stress can cause or contribute to a variety of physical, emotional, or behavioral problems. And because some level of stress occurs every day in most people's lives, it is important to learn effective coping skills that will prevent stress from building up and affecting you.

Stress and anxiety can prevent you from moving forward with a healthy lifestyle.

Many people experiencing stress have found these coping strategies helpful.

- **Move around** – take a walk or bike ride, work in your garden, or go dancing. Physical activity reduces tension.
- **Manage your time.** Organize your tasks and activities so you're more efficient.
- **Learn to say no** to things you don't really want or need to do.
- **Practice a breathing or relaxation** exercise for at least 10 minutes each day.
- **Create a quiet environment.** Eliminate distracting noises and activities so you can concentrate.
- **Get support when something bothers you.** Talk to your family or friends. If you need more help, you can call the Mental Health Department at 503-249-3434.
- **Do something fun.** Playtime is important, so visit friends, escape into the theater, play a game with your kids, or work on a hobby.
- **Look inside.** Many people find that self-contemplation and exploring religious or philosophical beliefs gives them a sense of perspective and peace.



## Getting enough sleep

Insomnia is the inability to either fall or stay asleep, or both.

Long-term insomnia can raise your blood sugar. Try to get 6–8 hours of good quality sleep per night.

### Insomnia

Check out the free online program at [kp.org/healthylifestyles](https://kp.org/healthylifestyles) and the following tips for help getting a good night's sleep.

When you cannot sleep, do not try to force yourself to fall asleep. The more you try to sleep, the more stimulation and worry you create. And that further interferes with falling asleep.

Insomnia once in a while does not generally harm your functioning. The more you worry about occasional sleep loss, the worse your insomnia may become. Learn to take occasional insomnia in stride.

Remember that maintaining a regular sleep schedule is critical for good sleep. Don't try to make up for lost sleep by spending more time in bed.

If you try the online program and these tips and still struggle with sleep, talk to your provider about a referral to the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia.



### Sleep apnea

If you have pauses in your breathing when you sleep, or you snore or gasp, ask your provider if you should have a sleep study. This is how sleep apnea is diagnosed.

Changing your attitude toward sleep can go a long way toward improving it.



### Quitting tobacco and vaping

Nicotine use is a health risk for everyone.

There is evidence that smoking does cause and vaping may cause increased insulin resistance in all people – those with prediabetes and diabetes, and those without.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says smokers are 30-40 percent more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than nonsmokers. Smokeless tobacco users also have higher rates of type 2 diabetes.

Quitting nicotine in any form is important for your health.

You can get a personalized online quit plan at [kp.org/healthylifestyles](https://kp.org/healthylifestyles).

You also can talk to one of our health coaches to develop a quit plan. They can discuss nicotine replacement products, medications, and classes to help with quitting. Call 503-286-6816 or 1-866-301-3866 and select option 2.



## What are my numbers?

Many steps that can improve your sleep and lower your cholesterol, blood pressure, weight, and stress are the same steps that can lower your blood sugar.

Even though prediabetes concerns your blood sugar, it's a good time to review other important measurements.

You can look up your blood pressure and blood test information in the Records section when you log on to **kp.org**. You can get a BMI (Body Mass Index) estimate at **kp.org/** calculators.



Body mass index (BMI):	
Blood pressure:	
A1c:	
Total cholesterol:	
LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol):	
HDL cholesterol ("good" cholesterol):	
Triglycerides (fats):	
Minutes of exercise you get in a typical week:	
Hours of sleep in a typical night:	

## Personal action plan

A goal is something you want to accomplish but may take a while to achieve, such as losing weight or decreasing your blood pressure.

Action plans are short-term plans that help you reach your goal. They must include a specific action or behavior that you want to do and know that you will be able to accomplish. Your plan must answer the questions:

- **What** are you going to do?
- **How** much are you going to do?
- **When** are you going to do it?
- **How many** days a week are you going to do it?

Your confidence level indicates how certain you are that you will succeed with your action plan. Attach a confidence level of 0 to 10 to your plan. A confidence level of 7 or more will help you to succeed. If your confidence level is lower than 7, think about changing your action plan.



### Action plan examples:

- This week I will walk (**what**) for 20 minutes (**how much**) before lunch (**when**) three days (**how many**).
- This week I will take my medications as prescribed before breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day.



My goal is:

## My action plan

This week I will:

(WHAT)

(HOW MUCH)

(WHEN)

(HOW MANY)

How **confident** are you that you will succeed with your plan?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

0 = not at all confident

10 = totally confident

**Your confidence level should be a 7 or higher.**

Things that could make it difficult to fulfill my action plan:

My plan for overcoming these challenges:

Support and resources I will need to fulfill my action plan:

My reward:

Review date:

With:

My signature:



Our health coaches are experts at taking you through a personal assessment and selecting goals. Don't hesitate to call them at 503-286-6816 or 1-866-301-3866, option 2. Wellness coaching is for Kaiser Permanente members 18 and older at no additional cost. It is available Monday through Friday.

## Resources

In addition to our health coaches, here are some other important resources that you might find useful.

- **kp.org/healthengagement:** Get information, tips, and resources you can use to help you take charge of your health.
- **Healthy Living catalog:** Pick up one the next time you are in a medical or dental office, or check it out at **kp.org/healthengagement/catalog**.
- **kp.org:** When you're registered on **kp.org** or the KP app, you get access to some of your personal health information. Confidential online services available at no additional cost to members include:
  - Sending nonurgent email messages to your doctor
  - Seeing information about your ongoing medical conditions, allergies, past office visits, and more
  - Getting results of some lab tests
  - Filling most prescriptions
  - Making or canceling appointments

To get started, sign up at **kp.org/register**. Once you are registered, you can use the website or the KP app. To use the Kaiser Permanente app, you must be a member registered on **kp.org**. If you need help with the website, please call 1-800-556-7677.



- **kp.org/healthylifestyles:** With our online wellness programs, you'll get advice, encouragement, and tools that can help you make healthier lifestyle choices. Topics include exercise, stress, nutrition, weight, sleep, quitting tobacco, and more.
- **Classes:** Many in-person and online offerings are available at Kaiser Permanente and in the community. Talk with a health coach about your goals and options.
- **Wellness coaching by phone:** Get support through one-on-one phone or video calls with a health coach. Discuss your health goals, the process of change, ideas to help jump-start your motivation, tools to help overcome obstacles, and options for new resources and next steps. Call 503-286-6816 or 1-866-301-3866, option 2. You also can register by signing on at **kp.org/appointments**. Click "Schedule appointment," then select Health and Wellness Education. Follow the prompts and make your selections to finish registering.