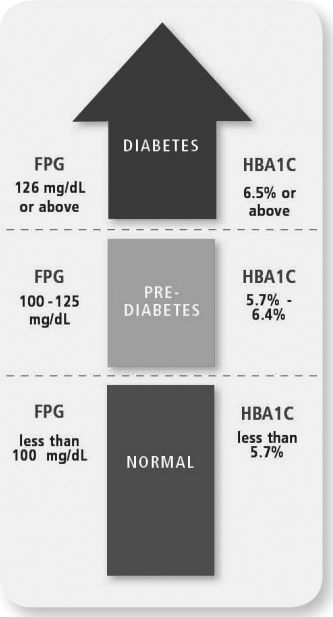
Intermountain® Healthcare

Pre-diabetes: *Act Now to Protect Your Health*

What is pre-diabetes?

If you have pre-diabetes, you have more sugar (**glucose**) in your blood than normal — but not so much that you can be diagnosed with diabetes.

Glucose comes from the food you eat, and is the body's main source of fuel. Your high blood glucose is a sign that your body is having trouble getting energy from your food. Instead of moving easily into your cells where it can be burned for energy, glucose is building up in your bloodstream.



Blood testing — such as with a fasting plasma glucose (FPG) test or HbA1c test — can reveal whether your blood glucose is high and if it means pre-diabetes or diabetes.

What are the symptoms?

Most people with pre-diabetes have no symptoms and don't feel sick. The condition is discovered through testing that measures blood glucose levels.

If pre-diabetes progresses to diabetes, a person may have symptoms of high blood glucose such as unusual thirst and hunger, frequent urination, weakness, and blurry vision.

More than 50 million U.S. adults have pre-diabetes. All of them can do something about it.

What are the risks?

Your high blood glucose puts you at increased risk for serious health problems, including the following:

- **Developing diabetes.** Many people with pre-diabetes go on to develop diabetes. Diabetes is a lifelong disease that can cause problems throughout your body.
- **Having a heart attack, stroke, or other cardiovascular problem.** Compared to a person with normal blood glucose levels, you have a 50% greater chance of heart attack or stroke.

Fortunately, there's a lot you can do to lower your blood glucose — and lower your health risks at the same time. The back page of this handout explains how you can act now to protect your health.

What causes pre-diabetes?

Scientists don't know the exact cause of pre-diabetes. But they've learned that these factors increase your chances of getting pre-diabetes and diabetes:

- Being overweight
- Lack of physical activity
- Age 45 years or older
- Having a parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes
- Ethnicity (people of African American, Native American, Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Asian descent are at higher risk)
- Previous gestational diabetes or delivery of a baby weighing more than 9 pounds at birth
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol

Can pre-diabetes be treated?

Yes! Lifestyle changes such as regular exercise, good nutrition, and weight loss can lower blood glucose in people with pre-diabetes. These changes can delay — and perhaps prevent — the onset of diabetes and other problems.

Intermountain's Diabetes Prevention Program has a number of resources that can help you make these changes. These include:

- **Pre-diabetes 101** — a 2-hour class taught by dietitians trained in diabetes care. You'll learn about preventing diabetes and make a personal plan for what you can do and who can help you. This class is free of charge to all patients.
- ***The Weigh to Health*® program** — a 6-month program to help you make lifestyle changes that support both weight loss and diabetes prevention.
- **Meet with a dietitian.** Individual sessions with a registered dietitian can help you make a personalized eating plan.

Ask your healthcare providers for more information about these resources.

My pre-diabetes action plan

Pre-diabetes puts you at risk for diabetes and other serious problems — act now to protect your health.

Become more physically active every day

Aim for at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.

My plans and goals: _____

_____

_____

Make healthy food choices

Aim for a low fat, high nutrient diet. Choose vegetables, fruits, and whole grains — and watch your portions.

My plans and goals: _____

_____

_____

Lose weight

Aim for a modest weight loss — say between 5% and 7% of your total weight — at a rate of 1 to 2 pounds per week.

My plans and goals: _____

_____

_____

See your doctor regularly

Aim for a visit every 6 months to have your blood retested and to check your overall health.

Next appointment: _____

Follow other recommendations

- ❑ Pre-diabetes 101 (2-hour class): _____
- ❑ The Weigh to Health program: _____
- ❑ Dietitian: _____
- ❑ Medication: _____
- ❑ Smoking cessation: _____
- ❑ Other: _____

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