

Understanding Prediabetes

Sharon Spratling, RD/Healthy Traditions, Sonoma County Indian Health

Before people develop type 2 diabetes, they almost always have "prediabetes" — blood glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.

Doctors sometimes refer to prediabetes as impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG), depending on what test was used when it was detected. This condition puts you at a higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Symptoms

There are no clear symptoms of prediabetes, so you may have it and not know it.

Some people with prediabetes may have some of the symptoms of diabetes or even problems from diabetes already. You usually find out that you have prediabetes when being tested for diabetes.

If you have prediabetes, you should be checked for type 2 diabetes every one to two years.

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

If you have prediabetes you can take steps to prevent it from becoming diabetes. For some people with prediabetes, early treatment can actually return blood glucose levels to the normal range.

Research shows that you can lower your risk for type 2 diabetes by 58% by:

- Losing 7% of your body weight (or 15 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds)
- Exercising moderately (such as brisk walking) 30 minutes a day, five days a week

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

The Diabetes Prevention Program at Healthy Traditions is a 16-week program designed to give you the tools you need to make changes and prevent diabetes. If you are Native American and have prediabetes contact us today to find out how we can help. Call 521-4502.

You Have the Power to Live Well with Healthy Traditions!