

It's Not Too Late to Prevent Diabetes: Take Your First Step Today

Adults ages 60 and older are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Yet many older adults find it hard to believe that they have the power to prevent or delay the disease. That's exactly what scientists found in a major research study on diabetes prevention. In fact, adults over 60 were *more successful* at preventing or delaying the onset of type 2 diabetes than were all other age groups. The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) wants older adults to know that it's not too late to prevent type 2 diabetes.

Almost 40 percent of adults ages 40 to 74—or 41 million people—have pre-diabetes, a condition where a person's blood glucose (sugar) level is higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Pre-diabetes raises a person's risk for developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. The risk of getting diabetes increases as you get older—almost one in five people over age 60 have diabetes.

The good news is that the landmark Diabetes Prevention Program study showed that type 2 diabetes can be delayed or even prevented by losing a small amount of weight by following a low-fat, low-calorie meal plan and exercising for 30 minutes a day, five days a week. The study showed that lifestyle changes are more effective than the use of a diabetes medication for people aged 60 and older, with a 71 percent reduction in the development of diabetes.

Losing 5 to 7 percent of your current body weight, if you are overweight, through healthy eating and exercising regularly, can help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. For a 200-pound person, this equals 10 to 15 pounds. Now is the time to take control of your health, for both yourself and your family. And, help your friends and loved ones and your communities to prevent diabetes by starting on a new, healthier lifestyle.

NDEP offers free booklets and tip sheets designed to help at-risk older adults stop diabetes in its tracks. For example, take a walk around the neighborhood instead of watching television. Buy healthy snacks instead of keeping cookies and chips in the cupboard for grandkids. Visit the park on a nice day, or have a dance party in your living room. These are small steps, but the rewards are big.

For more tips on how you can prevent type 2 diabetes, visit <http://www.ndep.nih.gov> or call 1-800-438-5383 and ask for the "It's Not Too Late to Prevent Diabetes" tip sheet. It's not too late to prevent diabetes, especially for older Americans. Take your first step today!