

Approximately 96 million people, more than one in three, have prediabetes. Sadly, more than 80% don't even know it. Prediabetes is when blood sugar is higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Insulin is a hormone that acts as a key to letting sugar into the cells. If you have prediabetes, your cells don't respond well to insulin so your pancreas makes more insulin in an attempt to get the cells to respond. Eventually, the pancreas can't keep up and the blood sugar rises. This is what is called prediabetes. A person can have prediabetes for years and have no defining symptoms. Therefore, it often goes undetected until diabetes type 2 sets in. You should know, the risk factors for prediabetes are:

- Being overweight
- Being over 45 years of age
- Having a mother, father, or sibling with diabetes
- Being physically active less than 3 times a week
- Having been diagnosed with gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or giving birth to a baby that weighed more than 9 pounds
- Having polycystic ovarian syndrome

Type 2 Diabetes is a serious chronic health condition that can lead to heart disease, stroke, blindness, and kidney failure. When you lower your risk of type 2 diabetes, your risk is lower for all of the other conditions too. If you want to know how you can do this, read on.

It is important to take small, practical steps that will lead you to a healthier lifestyle. The first thing you should do is to ask yourself what is motivating you to make these changes. What does the newer, healthier version of you look like? From there follow these steps:

- Set a weight loss goal

- Make a nutrition plan for healthier eating
- Set a physical activity goal for healthier movement and get moving
- Track your progress and watch how quickly you see success
- Prepare for the long run and think about who will support you and keep you going

You can improve your physical and mental health by making healthy changes such as eating healthier and getting active. And the best part is you don't have to wait for rewards. After just one walk your blood sugar goes down. When you make physical activity a habit, your sleep improves. You will enjoy the taste of fresh, healthy foods. And remember, you can invite friends and family to go on this journey with you.

For more information contact the Meigs County Health Department at 740-992-6626.

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