Stay active to help prevent (and control) diabetes

People who have—or are at risk for—diabetes have higher-than-normal levels of glucose (blood sugar) in the blood, which can harm the body. Exercise helps regulate glucose, which your body needs for energy, while increasing the body’s sensitivity to insulin, the hormone that helps your body better use the glucose it needs. Physical activity can also help you lose weight as well as lower high blood pressure, a key risk factor for diabetes.

While genetics plays a large role in the risk for type 2 diabetes, being active and exercising regularly is important to help reduce your risk. Talk to your doctor before beginning any exercise routine. Then follow these steps to get your body moving!

**Move more, sit less throughout your day.** Try parking at a distance from the door and walking briskly to your destination; pacing while on the phone or waiting in line; getting up to relay a message to your coworker rather than emailing; and taking a quick walk on your break.

**Nutrition basics to help prevent diabetes**

Improving your nutrition is one way you can manage your diabetes risk. When creating a healthy eating plan, aim to have a proper balance of foods that help keep blood sugar levels steady. Eating to reduce your risk of diabetes—and for overall good health—rests on a proper balance of complex carbohydrates and proteins while limiting refined or processed simple carbs and fat. Try these tips to eat better for diabetes prevention.

- **Choose healthy complex carbohydrates** such as fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and beans. Complex carbs are excellent sources of fiber, which prevent food from being absorbed too quickly and spiking blood sugar levels. Complex carbs are also packed with nutrients.

- **Limit your intake of less healthy simple carbs** like refined breads and grains, and foods with added sugar. They should be a limited part of your diet since they break down quickly and can cause spikes in blood sugar levels.

Strive for 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week. Walking is a great way to get started with exercise! Take it slow and don’t push yourself while you build up your time and distance. Then incorporate the following, alternating between them:

- **Heart-pounding exercise (cardio).** Examples include brisk walking, jogging, hiking, swimming, dancing, bike riding, and using a treadmill, elliptical or rowing machine.

- **Strength/resistance training.** Choose hand weights, resistance bands or even filled water jugs, machine-based equipment or exercises like push-ups, squats or planks.

- **Add flexibility exercises** like stretching or yoga poses to keep muscles limber.

To maximize your results, develop an exercise schedule, use the right shoes and gear for your activity, and build in recovery time between exercise sessions.

Remember to check with your healthcare practitioner to get the go-ahead before starting an exercise routine.

- **Eat fiber-rich foods** like lentils, peas (green and split), black beans and chia seeds. In addition, to slowing down the absorption of food, a high-fiber diet can help you feel full longer, which helps with weight management.

- **Focus on healthy proteins** such as animal-based foods like meat, fish and dairy products, and plant-based foods like nuts, soy, and beans. Proteins are the building blocks of muscles. Low-fat, protein-rich foods are an important part of a balanced diet.

By modifying your diet in beneficial ways, like choosing healthy carbohydrates and making sure you eat enough protein and fiber, it is possible to manage or reduce your risk for diabetes!
Feeling debt stress? Get smart about credit card spending!

There is no doubt that using credit cards can be helpful to manage finances. Yet racking up debt from high interest rates with high finance charges or late payment fees, especially if you have multiple cards, can be overwhelmingly distressing. Here are a few tips to help reduce credit card debt and what to know before signing up for yet another card.

- **Tally your credit card debt.** Write down the balances, minimum payments and interest rates for each card. Then rank them from highest to lowest interest rate, regardless of balance.
- **Set a payoff plan.** Aim to pay off the card with highest interest rate first. Then move on to pay off the card with the next highest rate, and so on. This will save you money over time, keeping your interest rate in check.
- **Put any extra money** plus the minimum monthly payment toward the card you're paying off first.
- **Continue to pay the minimum monthly payments** on all your other cards.
- **Don't make any new purchases** on the card you're paying off.
- **Repeat the above steps** until all your credit cards are paid off.

Remember, pay your balances on time to avoid paying late payment fees!

Before signing up for a credit card...

- **Know the APR (the annual percentage rate) of the cards.** This is the interest rate (fee the lender charges) when applying for a credit card. The higher the interest rate, the higher your finance charges (the dollar fee charged for paying over time instead of all at once) will be.
- **Use an online calculator to determine the true cost of paying off the card with interest.** If you're unable to pay the balance on your card each month, you can end up paying more for your purchases due to interest rates. Look for a calculator to discover the cost of paying only the minimum each month.

Need help to dig out of debt? Your Health Advocate member website offers resources to help you regain financial wellness.

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**Diabetes Prevention Month**

More than 1 out of 3 American adults have prediabetes, a risk factor for Type 2 diabetes, yet most don't know they have it. Learn more about diabetes, the risk factors, and lifestyle changes to help prevent it.


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