

What You Can Do If You're Predisposed to Diabetes

Diabetes affects many Americans, and many of them don't even know they have it. If you're older than 40 or have family members with the disease, you may be predisposed to diabetes. Understand your risk and make some lifestyle changes. This can lower your chances of developing it.



Understand your risk

Two things influence who develops diabetes: genetics and environmental triggers. You must inherit the genetic risk factors for the disease. But that doesn't mean you automatically get diabetes. You also must come into contact with an environmental trigger.

Type 1 diabetes risk factors

Once called juvenile diabetes, Type 1 diabetes affects more than 1.25 million people in the U.S., according to the American Diabetes Association. Type 1 diabetics' bodies don't make insulin. This is a hormone that regulates your blood sugar. They must take shots of it daily. If you have an immediate relative with Type 1 diabetes — especially when that person is a full sibling or your father — your risk of developing it increases. Caucasians and Northern Europeans also have an increased risk.

Type 2 diabetes risk factors

People with Type 2 diabetes either don't produce enough insulin or their bodies don't use it effectively. Sometimes diet and exercise can control it. Others take an oral medication, and those with the most severe form of the disease take insulin. If you have a parent and sibling with Type 2 diabetes, your risk of developing it is three times greater than the average American.

Change your lifestyle

If you're predisposed to diabetes, look closely at your lifestyle. Being sedentary and eating highly processed food ups your chances of diabetes. Exercise daily and eat more natural food.

Get off the couch

Exercise helps you use insulin and absorb glucose. This is great if you're predisposed to diabetes. You don't have to make any drastic changes to your routine, join a gym or take up a new sport. A brisk daily walk for 30 minutes is enough to do the trick.

Become a mindful eater

Diet is important in diabetes management. Choosing the right foods can help slow its development. Eat food that doesn't cause your blood sugar and insulin levels to spike. Trade refined carbohydrates like bread and sugar for whole grains and vegetables. Also cut back on the amount of processed meat you eat.

Lose weight

When you start moving your body more and change your diet, you'll likely start losing weight. This is a good thing. People who carry extra weight are more likely to have insulin resistance. They're also more likely to develop diabetes. Stay focused on managing your weight. Keep it within a healthy range for your height and frame to keep diabetes at bay.

Management begins before you receive an official diagnosis.

If you know you're predisposed to diabetes or want to know more about your risk of developing the disease, visit us at **Mercy.com**.

It's never too early to start taking better care of your body.



A Catholic health care ministry serving Ohio and Kentucky