

Food Fact - Dietary Advice for Pre Diabetes

Pre diabetes occurs when blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. People with pre diabetes have an increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and are at a higher risk of having heart disease. Making and maintaining lifestyle changes is the most effective way of reducing the risk of pre-diabetes progressing to Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Steps towards managing pre DM

- Manage your weight
- Eat well
- Avoid or stop smoking
- Reduce waist measurement (less than 80cm for women / less than 94cm for men)
- Increase physical activity

Manage your weight

If you are overweight, losing some weight will help to reduce your blood glucose level. Try to lose weight by cutting down on fatty foods and keeping as active as possible. Aim for weight loss of at least 5% (where appropriate) to reduce risk of Type 2 Diabetes, by reducing your energy (calorie) intake.

Eat well

- reduce your intake of sugar sweetened beverages and sugary foods
- increase your intake of wholegrain and high fibre foods
- reduce your fat intake, especially saturated fat,
- reduce salt intake
- if you drink alcohol, drink it in moderation
- eat regular meals with a small (fist sized) portion of carbohydrate at each meal
- eat five (handful sized) portions of fruit and vegetables per day
- avoid skipping meals and space your breakfast, lunch and evening meal out over the day, as this helps control your appetite and your blood glucose levels
- reduce red and processed meats

Include starchy carbohydrates at each meal

Carbohydrates provide us with our main source of energy. They are also a source of vitamins and fibre so are an important part of our diet. Most carbohydrates are digested and absorbed as glucose into the bloodstream - some very quickly (sugary foods) and some more slowly (starchy foods) - at each meal resulting in a rise in blood glucose levels.

Try to include the slowly absorbed starchy carbohydrates as these do not affect your blood glucose levels as much. Better choices include:

- pasta
- basmati or easy cook rice
- grainy breads such as granary, pumpernickel and rye
- new potatoes, sweet potato and yam
- porridge oats, All-Bran and natural muesli
- pulses, e.g. lentils, kidney beans and baked beans.

The high fibre varieties of starchy foods will also help to maintain the health of your digestive system and prevent problems such as constipation. All these different types of carbohydrate will be digested into sugar so limiting portion size is important.

Reduce salt - Do not add salt to your food and limit the amount of processed foods you eat.

Cut down on fat, especially saturated fat

Choose unsaturated fats or oils: olive oil and rapeseed oil. As fat is the greatest source of calories, eating less will help you to lose weight. To cut down on the fat you eat here are some tips:

- choose lower fat dairy products - milk, cheese and diet yoghurts
- choose leaner cuts of meat and trim off any visible fat/skin (choose white meat/fish instead of red meat or processed meats)
- grill, steam or oven bake rather than frying or roasting in oil
- include low-fat margarines and cooking oils based on unsaturated fats, e.g. olive oil
- avoid foods with hidden fats e.g. pastries, pies, cakes and biscuits
- try to have 2-3 portions of oily fish a week, e.g. mackerel, sardines, pilchards, salmon, herring and trout. They contain a type of fat (long chain Omega 3 fatty acids) that is good for your heart.

Drink alcohol in moderation only

No more than 2-3 units/day with no more than 14 units of alcohol per week

1 unit = ½ pint beer/cider/lager (normal strength), 1 small glass of standard strength wine 8/9% (125ml), 25ml measure of spirits.

Always choose a low calorie/sugar-free/diet mixer, e.g. low calorie/diet tonic, diet lemonade, diet cola. All types of alcoholic drinks are high in calories so if you are trying to lose weight it is best to have only the occasional alcoholic drink. Try to have at least 2 alcohol-free days per week.

Reduced fat and reduced sugar products

Many foods labelled as low fat, e.g. low-fat yoghurts, cakes and biscuits are often high in sugar, also low sugar products can be high in fat, so both are best avoided. Keeping a healthy balance can be difficult so using food labels can help to make appropriate choices. Use the following table as a guide.

A lot (per 100g food)	A Little (per 100g food)
17.5g fat or more	3g fat or less
5g Saturated fat or more	1.5g saturated fat or less
1.5g salt or more	0.3g salt or less
22.5g sugars or more	5g sugars or less

Keep active

Regular physical activity will help manage your weight, reduce your blood glucose levels as well as lowering your cholesterol. Aim for 30 minutes/day of moderate to vigorous intensity exercise that leaves you slightly breathless at least 5 times per week.

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