

Prediabetes and Your Child



You've been told that your child has prediabetes. This means that your child's blood sugar (glucose) is too high. Your child is at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

In type 2 diabetes, the body isn't able to use insulin very well. Insulin is needed to use the sugar in the blood. This is different than type 1 diabetes. In type 1 diabetes, the body doesn't make enough insulin. It's most often from the body's immune system damaging the cells in the pancreas. The pancreas is the organ where insulin is made.

Over time, high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) can lead to many health problems. For example, when your child is older, they may develop heart, eye, or kidney disease. You can take action now to lower your child's blood glucose level and help prevent diabetes in your child.

What is prediabetes?

their blood. Lab tests to check blood sugar include:

- **Fasting blood sugar (FBS).** This test measures blood sugar after not eating for at least 8 hours, often overnight. A normal FBS should be less than 100 mg/dL.
- **Glucose tolerance test (GTT).** This test measures blood sugar 2 hours after drinking a special high-sugar drink. A normal 2-hour GTT should be less than 140 mg/dL. If this test is used for screening, adequate carbohydrate intake of at least 150 grams per day should be assured for 3 days before testing.
- **Hemoglobin A1C (glycated hemoglobin, A1C).** This test measures the average blood sugar over time. A normal A1C should be less than 5.7%.

This means that your child had an FBS level of 100 to 125 at least once. Your child may also have had a 2-hour GTT result of 140 to 199, or an A1C of 5.7% to 6.4%. Higher values than these ranges normally mean that your child has diabetes.

Who is at risk for prediabetes?

Diabetes often runs in families. African American, Latino, Native American, Asian American, and Pacific Islander families are often affected. Your child may be more likely to develop diabetes if:

- They spend more time sitting than being active
- They are overweight for their age and height
- A parent or sibling has diabetes
- The mother had diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)

Talk with your child's healthcare provider about these and other risks.

You can help prevent type 2 diabetes



You can help decrease your child's risk of getting diabetes. Work with your child's healthcare provider on the following:

- **Healthy eating.** Make sure your child is eating many different kinds of foods. Focus on fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. Limit sugars and fats. And limit processed, prepackaged foods and fast foods, such as burgers, fries, and shakes. Stay away from sugary drinks, such as nondiet soda, sports drinks, lemonade, and sweet tea. These foods are high in calories, fat, and sodium. They are also low in nutrition.
- **Physical activity.** Being active helps your child's body use glucose. Try for at least 60 minutes of active playtime every day. It doesn't have to be all at once. A few playtimes of 10 to 20 minutes add up.
- **Weight loss.** Ask your healthcare provider for a referral to a lifestyle intervention program. This program will help your child get to and stay at a 7% weight loss and increase physical activity. Even a loss of 5% to 7% of body weight may help your child's body use glucose better

To learn more

For more information about diabetes, visit these websites:

- [American Diabetes Association at www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)
- [Children with Diabetes at www.childrenwithdiabetes.com](http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com)
- [Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists at www.diabeteseducator.org](http://www.diabeteseducator.org)
- [American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists at www.aace.com](http://www.aace.com)
- [National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse at www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes)
- [Endocrine Society at www.endocrine.org/topics/diabetes](http://www.endocrine.org/topics/diabetes)

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