

Blood Sugar & Fears

[Narrator] Diabetes is a serious chronic health threat in America. It affects tens of millions of people, and one of the biggest problems? Many people don't know they have the disease. Some of the statistics are staggering. More than one in ten adults has the disease. Experts warn that the problem often gets worse with age.

[Ann Albright] When you're at age 60 and beyond, the likelihood goes up to one in four.

[Edward Gregg] The risk of diabetes is higher among certain ethnic groups in the United States.

[Ann Albright] The other risk factors for developing Type 2 diabetes are being overweight or obese, having a family history of Type 2 diabetes.

[Edward Gregg] In addition, if you had diabetes while you were pregnant or if you have a history of high blood pressure, those are also risk factors for developing diabetes at a later point.

[Wayne Millington] I was, you know, relatively healthy, fit, doing the right things I thought, and never thought that I would be someone with prediabetes.

[Narrator] Milington works with diabetes prevention and control programs across the United States and understands the long-term consequences of the disease.

[Wayne Millington] I mean shocked is an understatement.

[Ann Albright] Prediabetes is a condition in which your blood sugar, blood glucose, is elevated but it's not yet high enough to be considered diabetes.

[Wayne Millington] The notion that people have about sugar is that sugar causes diabetes but it's not really that – it's the body's inability to break down sugar in the blood, and it's not just from foods but from food and drink.

[Narrator] Many people who have the disease don't know it. Diabetes can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, amputations, and blindness.

[Ann Albright] The classic symptoms of diabetes are excessive thirst, frequent urinations, you may feel really significant hunger, people are also fatigued, they may get blurry vision.

[Edward Gregg] Sometimes people can develop diabetes without having any warning signs at all.

[Wayne Millington] I have a child and I have a wife and I wanted to make sure that I would do the things that was necessary for me to be around.

[Ann Albright] Healthy eating and physical activity keep your body weight in a healthy range.

[Edward Gregg] Just losing five to seven percent of their body weight seems to make a big difference in their risk of developing diabetes later on.

[Narrator] That weight loss and exercise combination is often enough to prevent prediabetes from progressing into full, Type 2 diabetes. It's important to follow up with your doctor.

[Edward Gregg] Knowing your risk and then working with your doctor to develop a plan.

[Ann Albright] Your healthcare professional can help you determine whether or not you need to have a simple blood test to determine what your risk status is for diabetes.

[Narrator] Lifestyle programs can help you battle the disease through exercise and advice on making healthier food choices.

[Wayne Millington] Knowing when to eat, what to eat, and how to eat, portion controls, those were the things that really helped me, and it empowers you.

[Narrator] Some health studies have shown diabetes can shorten your life span by an average of 15 years.

[Wayne Millington] Having a support network is very important and understanding that this is not a disease that you can fight by yourself is also important.

[Narrator] Talk to you doctor, get screened if you are at risk, and learn how to avoid becoming one of the millions of new case of diabetes each year. Change the course. You *can* help prevent diabetes.