



DIABETES PREVENTION

PREVENT TYPE 2 DIABETES.

In cases of prediabetes or a high risk of type 2 diabetes, early detection and action can help prevent the onset of the illness or delay it by years. A healthy lifestyle is very important in this regard.

HOW CAN I PREVENT TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Studies show that high-risk individuals could prevent type 2 diabetes by implementing the following measures:

- › A healthy lifestyle
- › Regular exercise
- › A healthy and balanced diet
- › Losing excess weight (if overweight)

Scientific research has shown that type 2 diabetes can be prevented by giving up smoking, but further studies are required. There are lots of other good reasons for giving up smoking, however. If you don't smoke or have stopped smoking, you reduce the risk of strokes and heart attacks, and prevent many other ailments.

WHAT FACTORS INCREASE THE RISK OF DEVELOPING TYPE 2 DIABETES?

There are many different factors that increase the risk of type 2 diabetes:

- › Being overweight or obese, especially if the fat is around the waist (not just on the hips, thighs, and buttocks)
- › Lack of exercise
- › Smoking
- › A history of diabetes within the family
- › Diabetes during pregnancy ("gestational diabetes")

BESIDES THE QUESTIONNAIRE TEST, ARE THERE ANY OTHER MEDICAL TESTS?

Yes. There are three different tests that can help a doctor determine whether an individual has prediabetes or is at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. These tests measure blood sugar (or "blood glucose") levels in three different ways. Although these tests can help identify a risk of developing diabetes, they are not suitable for everyone. Your doctor or therapist will decide whether one of these tests is right for you. Test subjects are often overweight and exhibit other risk factors for diabetes. These factors include a history of gestational diabetes or a genetic (familial) predisposition. If the blood test shows that your blood sugar level is above average but not as high as it would be for an actual diabetic, this condition is referred to as "prediabetes". Individuals with prediabetes have a greater risk of becoming diabetic.

FASTING BLOOD GLUCOSE TEST

This test measures blood sugar levels after a person has had nothing to eat or drink (except water) for eight hours.

GLUCOSE TOLERANCE TEST

You are not allowed to eat or drink anything in the eight to twelve hours prior to this test. A sweet drink with a predetermined amount of sugar is provided for this test. A sample of blood is taken two hours later, and the blood sugar level is measured.

HAEMOGLOBIN A1c TEST (ALSO KNOWN AS HbA1c TEST)

In this test, it is irrelevant whether you have eaten beforehand because the blood test shows the average blood sugar level for the previous two to three months.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE PREDIABETES?

If you have prediabetes, you should change your lifestyle in order to avoid developing diabetes. This is what you can do:

- › **Lose weight** if you are overweight (BMI or waist-to-hip ratio). You can reduce your risk considerably by losing 5%-10% of your body weight. If you weigh 100 kilograms, for example, you should aim to lose five to ten kilos.
- › **Eat the right foods.** Prioritise eating fruit, vegetables, and low-fat dairy products. Eat very little meat, sweets and refined (finely ground) cereals. Avoid lemonade, fruit juices or other sweetened drinks. Cook fresh produce if possible.
- › **Exercise.** Exercise for at least 30 minutes a day so that your heart rate is raised and you start to sweat. This does not mean you have to go to a gym or do extreme workouts. Walking, gardening, and dancing are also good for your health. Additional strength training can improve the way you metabolise sugar.
- › **Quit smoking.** If you are a smoker, speak to your doctor or therapist about the best way to stop. The proportion of people who succeed in quitting is much higher among those who consult their doctor and use medication.
- › **Take your medication.** If your doctor or therapist has prescribed medication for you, continue to take it regularly as prescribed. This is particularly important for medicines that help reduce your blood pressure and cholesterol level. Individuals suffering from prediabetes or diabetes have an above-average risk of suffering a heart attack or a stroke, so those medicines are important.

WALK, SWIM, OR DANCE YOUR WAY OUT OF YOUR RISK OF DIABETES

SWICA will help you take control of your health and remain fit and healthy for longer.

It's not easy to change ingrained habits. That's why SWICA helps you in a number of different ways. As a healthcare organisation, SWICA helps individuals recognise their risk of diabetes and actively combat it. It does this by administering a simple risk test in the form of a questionnaire and providing personalised advice and financial contributions in the fields of fitness, exercise, nutrition, relaxation, and wellbeing. Medical specialists from santé24 will happily answer any of your questions and offer you individual advice. You should also take advantage of consultations relating to nutritional advice, the promotion of exercise and psychological problems.

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