

Diabetes in Kentucky Pre-diabetes

In 2005, approximately 8.9 percent of Kentucky's adult population had been diagnosed with **diabetes**. **Diabetes** is the number one cause of disability for Kentuckians and the fifth leading cause of death by disease. Among the 50 states, Kentucky ranks seventh for having the highest number in the adult population diagnosed with **diabetes**. The cost of **diabetes** in both life and medical care is alarming. In 2002 approximately 2.9 billion dollars was spent on treating **diabetes** in Kentucky. Preventing this catastrophic disease is a priority. An estimated 40.1 percent of Kentuckians (adults aged 40 to 74) have pre-diabetes and may develop type 2 **diabetes** within 10 years if they do not change lifestyle habits. Identifying those at risk for **diabetes** is one of the keys to reducing both the disease and cost of this disease in Kentucky.

What are the signs and symptoms of diabetes?

- Frequent urination (having to go to the bathroom more often than usual for no apparent reason).
- Excessive thirst (even after drinking an adequate amount).
- Fatigue (feeling tired).
- Extreme hunger (when you normally should not be hungry).
- Unusual weight loss (not explained by dieting or increased physical activity).
- Blurred vision resulting from fluid leaking into the lens of the eye from elevated blood glucose. This condition causes the lens of the eye to swell making it unable to focus properly. This condition may occur at the onset of diabetes or during periods when blood glucose fluctuates. It passes with time or when blood glucose levels decrease.
- Dry, itchy skin.
- Tingling or numbness in feet (may be a sign of damage to the blood vessels or nerves in your feet due to undiagnosed or untreated **diabetes**).

These signs and symptoms may indicate **diabetes** (although you may have no signs and symptoms). Your health care provider is the **ONLY ONE** who can make the diagnosis. **DO NOT** rely on symptoms only.

What is pre-diabetes?

Pre-diabetes occurs when blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be diagnosed as **type 2 diabetes**. **Pre-diabetes** is a major risk factor for developing **type 2 diabetes**. Approximately 54 million people in the United States have been diagnosed with **pre-diabetes**. With this diagnosis, changing lifestyle habits becomes important. By changing diet and physical activity patterns, further progression of this deadly disease may be stopped.

Who is at risk for having pre-diabetes?

Those who are:

- Overweight.
- Over 45 years of age.

- Physically inactive.
- A member of high risk ethnic group (African-American, American Indian, Hispanic, Asian-American, or Pacific Islander).

Those who have:

- A family history of **diabetes** (mother, father, brother, sister, or grandparents).
- Been diagnosed with or have had **gestational diabetes** (**diabetes** while being pregnant).
- An **HDL** (good cholesterol) less than 35.
- **Triglycerides** greater than 250.
- A history of pre-diabetes.
- Conditions associated with insulin resistance such as **polycystic ovary syndrome** and **acanthosis nigricans** (a skin condition that commonly occurs around the neck or in skin folds and appears thick and dark).
- Or had a history of vascular disease.

Those who have had:

- A baby weighing greater than 9 pounds.

Ways to prevent or slow progression of pre-diabetes to type 2 diabetes

Try to stay as healthy as possible by maintaining a healthy weight, practicing good handwashing techniques for staying germ-free, decreasing stress, and getting adequate amounts of sleep. Here are some overall tips for preventing and/or slowing progression of pre-diabetes to type 2 diabetes:

- Know your risk factors.
- Modest weight loss (5 to 7 percent).
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Change your eating habits by making healthier choices. Eat more fruits and vegetables and eat fewer foods high in fat.
- Increase physical activity. If you are not currently in a physical activity program, begin one. Get up and get moving. Participate in 30 minutes of physical activity every day. It is important to check with your doctor before beginning a physical activity program.
- Have regular doctor checkups.

References

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This is a publication in a five-part series on diabetes. Other publications in this series are:

- General diabetes information: HSW-PAR.814
- Type 1 diabetes: HSW-PAR.816
- Type 2 diabetes: HSW-PAR.817
- Gestational diabetes: HSW-PAR.818

Peggy Riley, RN, MSN
Extension Health Specialist for Nursing

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