

Med-Sense Guaranteed Association

JOURNAL



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MSGGA
Med-Sense Guaranteed Association



Preventing Diabetes

Small Steps Can Make a Big Difference

Chances are, you know someone who has diabetes. It might even be you. Diabetes is one of the most common disorders in the U.S. It affects about 1 in 9 Americans. Diabetes raises your risk for serious health problems. It can damage the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and heart, and it is linked to some types of cancer.

Now, what if you learned that there's a low-cost, scientifically proven way to greatly reduce your chances of getting type 2 diabetes, the most common type? Would you give it a try?

More than two decades ago, a landmark NIH-supported study, called the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), released its results. It found that people at high risk for diabetes were much less likely to get the disorder if they lost a little weight through healthy eating and physical activity. Their risk of getting diabetes dropped by nearly 60% compared to people who did not aim to make healthy changes.

For those over age 60, the results were even more striking. Their risk of getting diabetes dropped by 71% when they made healthy changes. The benefits were so clear that the study ended a year early, after just three years. Participants in the comparison group were encouraged to also make the healthy changes to reduce their diabetes risk.

DPP has had a lasting influence on medical care in the U.S. and around the world. Since its initial results were reported, lifestyle change programs based on the findings have become widely available across the country.

A 10-year follow-up study showed that people in the original treatment group delayed diabetes by about four years. A later study found benefits even 22 years after the study began, with people in the lifestyle-change group having about a 25% reduced risk of developing diabetes.

“Even though the initial treatments lasted only three years, participants did have longer-term health benefits,” says Dr. William Knowler, an NIH diabetes expert.

NIH-supported researchers continue to study new and proven ways to help people prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. But we already know that taking steps to prevent or manage diabetes can lower your risk of developing diabetes-related health problems.

Are You at Risk?

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. Glucose is your body’s main source of energy. Normally, a hormone made by the pancreas called insulin helps glucose get into your cells to be used for energy. If you have diabetes, your body doesn’t make enough insulin or use insulin properly. Glucose then stays in your blood and doesn’t reach your cells.

Anyone can get type 2 diabetes, even children. But certain factors can raise your risk. You’re more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if you are at least 35 years old or have a family history of diabetes. Black Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians, and Asian Americans are also at higher risk.

People who are overweight or have obesity and people who don’t get enough physical activity are also more likely to develop the disease. But these are changeable factors.

About 1 in 3 American adults has a condition called prediabetes. It occurs when your blood sugar is higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be called diabetes. Most people with prediabetes don’t realize they have it. That’s because prediabetes tends to have few symptoms, and many people don’t get screened.

“We can diagnose prediabetes and diabetes with a very simple blood test known as a hemoglobin A1C. You don’t need to fast to do this test,” says Dr. Tannaz Moin, a physician and diabetes researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles. The A1C test reflects your average levels of blood sugar over the past three months.

“Prediabetes is viewed as a very strong risk factor for type 2 diabetes. But not everyone with prediabetes goes on to develop type 2 diabetes,” Moin adds. “That’s why it’s important to be screened and talk with your medical providers about your risk factors and things that you can do to prevent type 2 diabetes if you’re at risk.”



A Role for Medications

Although making healthy lifestyle changes has proven effective for preventing diabetes, it doesn't work for everyone. For those people, medications may help.

NIH's DPP study looked at whether the diabetes drug metformin might also prevent or delay diabetes onset. It found that the drug could reduce the risk of developing diabetes by about 30%. For some patients, a combination of metformin and lifestyle changes might be best.

In recent years, a class of drugs called GLP-1 drugs has become widely available for weight management and diabetes treatment. These drugs have proven effective at reducing weight and keeping blood glucose in check. Some studies hint that they might also help to prevent or delay diabetes.

"Body weight is an important factor that determines the risk of getting type 2 diabetes. So the potential here is great," says Knowler. "But the problem is, as with any new drugs, it takes many years to know how effective and safe they will be. And a huge problem with any kind of weight loss is sustaining it, not achieving it."

Because GLP-1 drugs are still relatively new, it's not entirely clear how outcomes will change if people stop taking the drugs. And possible side effects of long-term use are still uncertain.

Healthy Changes That Last

"Making lifestyle changes is hard. So it's important to get the support you need to make the changes last," says Dr. Joshua J. Joseph, a physician and diabetes researcher at Ohio State University. "You can get that support through programs like the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP)."

NDPP is based on the findings of NIH's DPP study. It aims to help people make long-term lifestyle changes that prevent or delay diabetes (see the Wise Choices box).

Local hospitals, health departments, libraries, senior centers, and faith-based organizations may also offer programs or seminars to help prevent type 2 diabetes. For physical activity, look for activities that you enjoy. Experts recommend brisk walking for a low-cost activity. Working out with others can be motivating for some people. Consider group classes like Zumba or Pilates.

"It's important to think of diabetes prevention throughout the lifespan. So, it's just as critical to work with children on healthy eating and healthy behaviors as it is to work with older people," Joseph explains. "If we work across the life course, it could lead to large reductions in the development of diabetes in the U.S. and around the world."

NIH - News In Health

Aim to Prevent Diabetes

- **Maintain a healthy weight.** If you are overweight, set a weight-loss goal. Start by aiming to lose at least 5% of your current weight.
- **Get moving.** Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days a week.
- **Eat healthy.** Find tips for healthy eating at www.myplate.gov.
- **Get support.** CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) offers year-long programs nationwide. Participants work with a lifestyle coach in person or online to build healthy habits that last. It's free to eligible participants. Find an NDPP near you.





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Healthy Eating Linked to Better Brain Health



(NIH-News In Health) As the U.S. population ages, more adults are developing thinking and memory problems, called mild cognitive impairment. Scientists have been looking for ways to prevent or delay this type of mental decline and more severe disorders, like dementia.

Some studies have found links between healthy eating and improved thinking and memory. An eating pattern called the MIND diet has shown promise. It features leafy greens and other vegetables. It prefers berries over other fruit. It also encourages eating whole grains, beans, nuts, and at least one weekly serving of fish. It limits red meat, sweets, cheese, fast food, and fried foods.

To study the effects of the MIND diet, scientists analyzed data from about 14,000 people. Their average age was around 64 at the start. About 57% were female, 70% were White, and 30% were Black. Their eating patterns were assessed. Their cognitive health was measured at the beginning and end of the study, about 10 years later.

Overall, people who were eating foods most similar to the MIND diet were less likely to have problems with thinking and memory. They also had slower rates of cognitive decline. People who most closely stuck to the MIND diet had a 4% reduced risk of cognitive problems compared to those who ate a very different diet.

“With the number of people with dementia increasing with the aging population, it’s critical to find changes that we can make to delay or slow down the development of cognitive problems,” says Dr. Russell Sawyer of the University of Cincinnati, who led the study.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Med-Sense Guaranteed Association will be held telephonically on Friday, December 27, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY

Med-Sense Guaranteed Association December 27, 2024 Annual Meeting of Members THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF MED-SENSE GUARANTEED ASSOCIATION

The undersigned member of the Med-Sense Guaranteed Association does hereby constitute and appoint the President of Med-Sense Guaranteed Association, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of Med-Sense Guaranteed Association and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [], or to [] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors: Don Breckenridge, Bart Bouchein, and Rick Hall
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____, 2024

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, Missouri 63131 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

December 13, 2024

For information regarding your membership
and association services, call or write:

**Membership Services Office
Med-Sense Guaranteed Association
12444 Powerscourt Drive
Suite 500A
St. Louis, MO 63131
1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200**

Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.



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