

So, you have Pre-Diabetes?

You have recently had a blood test done at the surgery which shows that you have a condition called Pre-diabetes. This does not mean that you have diabetes but means that you are at an increased risk of developing diabetes in the future. Please read the information below about Pre-diabetes and important advice on how to reduce your risk of developing Diabetes.

Pre-diabetes is a serious health condition where your blood sugar levels are raised above normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. There are no clear symptoms of Pre-diabetes. You can have it and not know it. Pre-diabetes puts you at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition that causes a person's blood glucose (sugar) level to become too high. The hormone insulin – produced by the pancreas – is responsible for controlling the amount of glucose in the blood.

There are two main types of diabetes:

Type 1 – where the pancreas doesn't produce any insulin.

Type 2 – where the pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin or the body's cells don't react to insulin.

Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't produce enough insulin to function properly, or the body's cells don't react to insulin. This means glucose stays in the blood and isn't used as fuel for energy. Over time, if your blood sugar is high, this damages your blood vessels and your heart.

What is HbA1c?

A haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) test measures the amount of glucose (sugar) that's attached to haemoglobin (a protein found in red blood cells). A HbA1c blood test is used as a way to measure your average blood sugar levels over the past three months.

Understanding the results of a HbA1c test		
Normal	Prediabetes	Diabetes
Less than <42mmol/mol	42mmol - 47mmol	= or greater than > 48mmol

How did I get Pre-diabetes?

There are three main things that contribute to developing Pre-diabetes, and the progression to diabetes:

1. What you eat: Being overweight affects the body's ability to process sugar in the blood.
2. What you do: Long periods of inactivity (e.g., watching television all evening) reduce the ability of insulin to deal with sugar in the blood. Being physically active increases the efficiency of the insulin.
3. The genes you inherit also contribute to the development of Pre-diabetes. You can't change your genes, but you can do something about your eating habits and your physical activity.

How serious is Pre-diabetes?

Pre-diabetes is a serious problem, which means that you are at increased risk of progressing to type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Heart risk: People with pre-diabetes often have high blood pressure and are twice as likely to develop cardiovascular disease (e.g. angina, heart attack and stroke).

Diabetes risk: If no action is taken, 33 out of 100 people with pre-diabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within 6 years. The risk you have now of getting diabetes is about the same as you pulling the short straw out of three straws offered to you.

Why is it important to avoid diabetes?

Diabetes is a serious illness. Many people with diabetes develop serious complications such as impaired eyesight, kidney failure, neuropathy and cataracts. Diabetes is a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks and stroke and is the leading cause of amputation in the UK.

The good news!

The good news is at this early stage, the condition is often reversible through making relatively simple changes to your lifestyle, like - eating the right foods, losing weight and increasing your level of physical activity!

What can I do to reduce my chances of getting diabetes and heart disease?

Lose weight	Eat well	Move more	Be smoke free	Drink less
Losing 5 -10 percent of your total weight can lower your chances of developing diabetes by more than half!	Eating a healthy diet that includes lots of fruit, vegetables, whole grains and a moderate amount of unsaturated fats, meat and dairy, and remember to watch your portion sizes.	Aim for 150 minutes of activity per week—or about 30 minutes, five days a week. Any type of activity is good for you. The more you do the better.	Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. Quit smoking to look younger and live longer. We're here to help you!	Cutting back on alcohol can benefit your health. Men and women are both advised not to regularly drink more than 14 units per week. Equivalent to six pints of average strength beer or six 175ml glasses of average strength wine.

The NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme

The Healthier You: NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme is an NHS funded programme that can support you to make simple changes to your diet, weight management and physical activity levels. Through the program, which is offered virtually, you'll take small, manageable steps that add up to lasting lifestyle changes to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. The program supports you every step of the way with a trained coach to guide and encourage you, online group support and skills to help you lose weight, be more physically active and manage stress.

So, what now?

As your blood test was in the pre-diabetic range you are eligible for the free NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme. You can now sign yourself up to the programme online at <https://preventing-diabetes.co.uk/self-referral/> / or call 0333 5773010. Alternatively, please speak to your practice nurse who can refer you and provide you with more information about lifestyle changes.

You will also be invited for an annual blood test at the practice to check that you have not developed diabetes.