

# Diabetes & You

## Take Five Small Steps To Prevent Diabetes

(NAPS)—Almost 16 million Americans are well on their way to developing diabetes—and most don't even know it. They have a condition called pre-diabetes, which means their blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not yet diabetic. The good news is there is now scientific proof that they can delay or prevent the disease and its devastating complications.

The key to diabetes prevention is taking small steps toward living a healthier life, according to the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Everyone can benefit from the rewards of avoiding diabetes and its serious complications such as heart attack, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, or losing a foot or leg.

The Diabetes Prevention Program's Clinical Trial, a landmark study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, showed that people with pre-diabetes lowered their risk of developing diabetes by more than half by getting 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week and losing five to seven percent of their body weight.

If you are over 45 and overweight, you are at increased risk for pre-diabetes. Here are five small steps you can take today to live a healthier life and prevent or delay diabetes:

**1. Find out if you are at risk:** The first step is to find out if you are at risk for diabetes or if you have pre-diabetes. Talk to your health care provider at your next visit.

**2. Set realistic goals:** You don't have to knock yourself out to delay or prevent diabetes. Start by



**Take these five steps to help lower your risk of developing diabetes.**

making small changes. For example, try to get 15 minutes of physical activity a day this week. Each week add five minutes until you build up to the recommended 30 minutes a day, most days.

**3. Make better food choices:** Try to eat more fruits and vegetables (five to nine servings a day), beans, and grains. Reduce the amount of fat in your diet. Choose grilled or baked foods instead of fried.

**4. Record your progress:** Write down everything you eat and drink. Keeping a food diary is one of the most effective ways to lose weight and keep it off. Review this diary with your health care provider.

**5. Keep at it:** Making even modest lifestyle changes can be tough in the beginning. Try adding one new healthy change a week. Always get back on track, even if you fall off a few times. The key is just to keep at it.

If you have pre-diabetes, the NDEP has information to help you. To get a free copy of "Small Steps. Big Rewards. Your Game Plan for Preventing type 2 Diabetes," call 1-800-438-5383 or visit the NDEP website at [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov).