



# HealthyPeople

## NATIONAL DIABETES MONTH

Diabetes is one of the leading causes of disability and death in the United States. It can cause blindness, nerve damage, kidney disease, and other health problems if it's not controlled. One in 10 Americans have diabetes — that's more than 30 million people. And another 84 million adults in the United States are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The good news? People who are at high risk for type 2 diabetes can lower their risk by more than half if they make healthy changes. These changes include: eating healthy, getting more physical activity, and losing weight.

### You can lower your risk for type 2 diabetes with some simple steps.

Being overweight raises your risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. It can also increase risk of high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol, and high blood glucose (sugar). If you are overweight, losing weight may help you prevent and manage these conditions. And you don't have to lose a lot of weight to improve your health—even losing 10-15 pounds can make a big difference.

### Here's what has worked for some people who have lost weight and kept it off:

- Cut back on calories and fat.
- Be physically active most days of the week.
- Eat breakfast every day.
- Weigh yourself at least once per week.
- Watch less than 10 hours of TV per week.

**One of the key factors is physical activity.** Even if you've never exercised before, you can find ways to add physical activity to your day. Even if your activities aren't strenuous, you'll still get health benefits. Once physical activity is a part of your routine, you'll wonder how you managed without it.

## SMALL STEPS FOR YOUR HEALTH

There are many things you can do to help prevent type 2 diabetes or its complications, but where do you start? It's not always easy to eat healthy and be active in today's fast-paced world. It's easier to make healthy lifestyle changes one step at a time and over time. Think of each small step as one piece of your effort to change your habits. The good news is that making just a few small changes can have a big impact on your health.

### Are You Ready, Willing, and Able to Change?

To succeed at making lifestyle changes you need to answer YES to the question, "Are you ready, willing, and able to change?" You must have better reasons to change than reasons not to change. Take what you want to do and break it down into small steps.

Then think about a few things you are ready, willing, and able to change and leave other habits for another time. Think about your current eating and activity habits. What foods do you buy? How active are you? Try to keep honest food records for a few days to get a true picture of what you eat. Based on your current habits, start with a few changes that are easy to tackle. Pick some changes that you want to do the most, and that will make the biggest impact. Perhaps choose one change in your eating habits and another in activity. Remember you don't need to change everything at once. For example, if you eat fast food at lunch because you're in a hurry, try bringing a healthier meal from home. Maybe you can walk in place during the commercial break when you watch TV.