

A photograph of several rainbow-colored lollipops and many small, broken pieces of candy scattered on a white surface. The lollipops have a wooden stick and are partially broken, with colorful shards of candy (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, pink) scattered around them. The text "Sweet truth" is overlaid on the image.

Sweet truth

How can I prevent diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your blood glucose (blood sugar) is too high. If left untreated, having too much glucose in your blood can cause health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, nerve damage, eye problems, and kidney disease.

It is estimated that over 30 million people in the United States have diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common type, but the "sweet truth" is you can take action to delay, prevent, and manage diabetes.

If you're at increased risk of diabetes because you have a sibling or parent with the disease, or you are overweight or had gestational diabetes, it's particularly important to take action to prevent diabetes.

Fortunately, it's never too late to start making simple changes to avoid some of the serious health complications from diabetes. There are several things you can do to lower your risk of developing the disease.

Get More Exercise

Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days a week. Research shows that combining aerobic exercise with resistance training can help control diabetes. Talk with your healthcare provider about which activities are best for you.

Regular physical activity can help you:

- Lose weight
- Lower your blood sugar
- Increase your sensitivity to insulin, which helps keep your blood sugar in a healthy range

Lose Excess Weight

If you're overweight, every pound you lose can help you prevent diabetes. It may be possible to delay or prevent diabetes by losing just 5-7% of your weight.



Check your blood sugar



Improve Your Diet

Eating plenty of high-fiber foods including fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains and nuts can reduce your risk of diabetes by improving your blood sugar control.

Other tips include:

- Eat a variety of food and don't exclude certain food groups, since it may cause you to remove healthy nutrients from your diet
- Choose foods with less fat
- Avoid sweetened beverages and drink water instead

Know Your Numbers to Reduce Your Risk

Talk to your doctor to see if you should be tested for diabetes, since 25% of people with diabetes don't know they have it. The American Diabetes Association recommends blood glucose screening if:

- You're age 45 or older and overweight
- You're younger than age 45 and overweight, with one or more additional risk factors for type 2 diabetes — such as an inactive lifestyle or a family history of the disease

ACTION ITEMS

There are steps you can take to prevent type 2 diabetes. Ask your healthcare provider what your risks are for developing the disease and what you can do to avoid getting it.