

Pre-Diabetic? 6 Tips to Manage Your Carb Intake

By Rosemary Black

[Here, what you need to know to fend off type 2 diabetes.](#)

If you have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes, you join the estimated 60 million Americans (about 30 percent of the population) who have this condition. But rather than despair that you're now destined to develop full-blown type 2 diabetes, take action. The reality is that there's plenty for you to do to stay healthy.

"Think of pre-diabetes as a wake up call," says Hope Warshaw, MMSc, RD, CDE, BC-ADM, the author of "Diabetes Meal Planning Made Easy." "It's time to change your eating habits and activity level, step by step, for the rest of your life. In fact, it's when you have prediabetes that you can get the most bang for your effort."

Pre-diabetes doesn't just happen overnight, but changes have probably been occurring in the body for 5 to 10 years before diagnosis, Warshaw says. And while the changes that have taken place aren't completely reversible, "they're halttable—actions to live a healthy lifestyle can prevent or at least delay the onset of type 2 diabetes," Warshaw says.

While many people mistakenly believe that in order to avoid being diagnosed with full-blown diabetes (or to manage it) they must restrict foods that contain carbohydrates, that's not the case. "It's quality versus quantity," Warshaw says. "People don't need to reduce the amount of carbohydrates they eat. But they need to look at getting healthier and more nutritious sources of carbohydrates."

Here's how you can help prevent the development of full-blown type 2 diabetes.

The most effective way to prevent the disorder is with a 5 to 7 percent weight loss, Warshaw says. This means reducing your total calories, reducing the amount of fat you eat, and bumping up physical activity to 150 minutes a week.

Most people are getting about half their calories from carbohydrates--and that's okay, Warshaw says. The biggest problem with most of the carbohydrates people consume is that they're rich in added sugar. In fact, the typical American gets about 22 teaspoons a day of added sugar versus the 6 to 9 we should get, she says.

Take a look at what you're drinking for beverages. "Americans are sipping and slurping 500 calories plus a day in drinks," Warshaw says. Drink water instead. "Just making that one change and you'll save a lot of calories and carbohydrates," she says.

Avoid foods made with high fructose corn syrup, says Loren Wissner Greene, MD, clinical associate professor of medicine at NYU Langone Medical Center in New York City. These are unhealthy carbohydrates and not worth spending calories on.

Keep your liver healthy by keeping red meat consumption to a minimum. "You can protect your liver by eating more beans, vegetables, eggs and dairy products, and avoiding meats," Greene says.

Aim for an overall healthy eating plan that balances protein, fat and carbohydrate rather than focusing your attention exclusively on carbohydrates. One study of young people with type 1 diabetes found that when there was too much emphasis on the quantity rather than the quality of carbohydrates, the patients were much less likely to eat a healthy diet.

Source:

Emphasis on Carbohydrates May Negatively Influence Dietary Patterns in Youth With Type 1 Diabetes. By [Sanjeev N. Mehta](#), [Denise L. Haynie](#), [Laurie A. Higgins](#), [Natalie N. Bucev](#), [Alisha J. Rovner](#), [Lisa K. Volkening](#), [Tonja R. Nansel](#), and [Lori M.B. Laffel](#). Diabetes Care. American Diabetes Association.

<http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/32/12/2174.full?sid=d6696b52-901d-4b23-a603-8080f9a076cd>