TIME TO TALK

Facts and actions against diabetes

MERCK

Why should you talk with your family about prediabetes or T2D?

This guide has been developed to help you protect the health and wellbeing of your loved ones from prediabetes and type 2 diabetes (T2D), all through the power of simple conversation.

If you have type 2 diabetes, your family are far more likely to develop the condition[1,2]

In fact, if you have T2D, **your parents, siblings or children are**

2-6x **more likely to develop the condition.**[1,2]

By having simple conversations with your family, you can help them become aware of their increased risk and potentially prevent the onset of diabetes.[3]

But, talking about health issues with your loved ones isn't always easy as:

- **Communication barriers**
- **Emotional reactions**
- **Fears of conflict**

can often prevent us from broaching important topics, allowing potential health problems to go unaddressed.

You have the power to make a difference

With a little help, you can navigate these discussions with sensitivity and care, empowering your family to take the first steps towards a healthier life by sharing the required:

- **knowledge**
- **motivation**
- **support**

It's time to talk, take action, and transform lives

Open conversations about prediabetes and T2D can drive early diagnosis and protect the health of your family[4]

Most people (43%) only get a blood test after worrying symptoms appear[4]

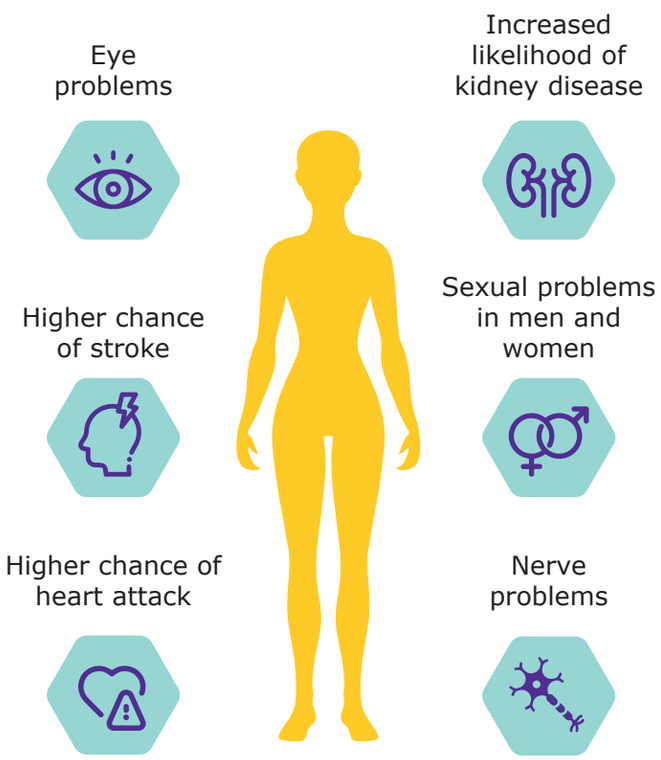
By this time, it may be too late to prevent or delay T2D as by the time symptoms appear, the disease has already progressed.

The second most common (35%) reason people initiate testing is due to family concern or history of prediabetes or T2D[4]

This underlines the crucial role family can play in diagnosis.

If left unchecked and untreated, prediabetes or T2D can lead to long-term health complications that could cause serious damage[5]

Common complications may include:[5]



However, early diagnosis and action can help people live longer, healthier lives and has many benefits, including:

- A chance to delay or prevent the development of T2D[6,7]
- Lower chance of life-changing complications, including heart attacks, kidney failure and vision loss[6,8,9,10]
- Improved effectiveness of treatments[6]

By having simple conversations about prediabetes and T2D you can inspire action in the family:[4]

- Encourage positive lifestyle and health changes in those you love.
- Become a trusted companion for discussing health-related concerns.
- Positively impact everyone's emotions and foster a supportive family environment
- Encourage early testing to improve long-term health benefits

Starting positive family conversations about T2D

Lots of people find it difficult to find the right time, place and words to start talking about prediabetes and T2D. Our tips will support you and show you how to begin your conversation.

Choose the right time and setting

Pick a calm, relaxed environment for the conversation.

Provide clear, factual information

Explain the increased risk for family members and discuss common risk factors of prediabetes and T2D (pgs.1,5).

Focus on the benefits of early diagnosis and intervention (pg.2).

Express care for their health, not fear

Communicate your worry for their health in a caring manner and try to avoid using alarming or scary language.

Encourage proactive steps

Suggest they speak with their healthcare provider about testing and prediabetes/T2D risk.

Offer to support them in making lifestyle changes, e.g., invite them to join you in exercising or cook healthy meals together.

Be prepared for different reactions

Some family members may be receptive whilst others may be dismissive.

If they're not ready to discuss the issue, offer to continue the conversation when they feel more comfortable.

Don't be afraid of silence

Silence allows the person time to gather their thoughts and express themselves.

Remain open to future discussions

Reassure your family member that they're fine to come back to you with anything else they might want to talk about.

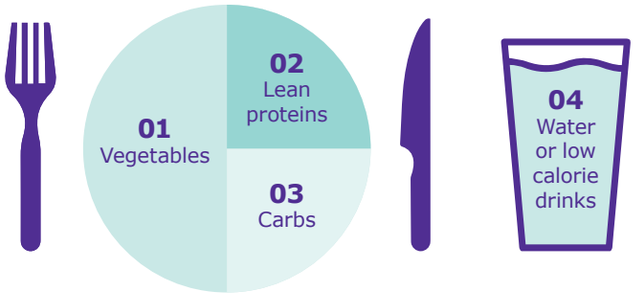
You can protect the health of your family by encouraging positive lifestyle changes

Eating healthier[11]

To reduce the risk of diabetes you can encourage a healthy, balanced diet, moderate portions, and regular meal times.[11]

A simple strategy to help create balanced and healthy meals is the Diabetes Plate Method:[11]

01 Fill half your plate with vegetables e.g., tomatoes, green beans, carrots, broccoli,
02 Fill one quarter of your plate with lean proteins e.g., fish, chicken, turkey, eggs, cheese, lentils
03 Fill one quarter of your plate with carbohydrates e.g., whole grains, sweet potato
04 Choose water or a low calorie drink e.g., tea



Exercising daily[12]

Regardless of age, gender, or race, exercising is crucial in preventing and managing prediabetes and T2D.[12]

You can share the experience by asking your relatives if there are any types of activities they'd like to try together. This could be anything from walking, jogging, dancing or even chores! **Everything counts, as long as it keeps your heart rate up.**[12]

The ultimate goal is 150 minutes of exercise every week! This may seem daunting but can be achieved by splitting workouts:[12]

150 mins of exercise per week

3 times per week | 5 times per week | 6 times per week

Getting enough sleep[13]

Getting little sleep (less than 6 hours per day) can increase the risk of T2D by 1.4 times compared to those who sleep more than 8 hours regularly. Tips for restful sleep include:[13]

- Adopt regular sleep schedules
- Avoid sleeping too much in the day
- Exercise in the day
- Avoid caffeinated drinks at night
- Eat light foods at dinner
- Drink less alcohol

Taking care of your mental health[14]

If you have a family history of prediabetes or T2D, the constant need to manage the risk can sometimes be overwhelming. You can check in on your family's wellbeing by reminding them:[14]

- Stop blaming yourself – Nobody is perfect and mistakes are natural!
- Reward yourself - Find ways to treat yourself so it doesn't feel like work all the time
- Don't isolate yourself - Remember family and friends can help ease the burden

Visit EveryStepInDiabetes to learn more about T2D and prediabetes. You can also find out if you are at risk via the online symptom checker

Recognising prediabetes and T2D risk factors in your family could be the key to delaying or even preventing the condition

If a family member scores 2 or more on the below checklist, **you should talk to them about their risk of prediabetes or T2D and encourage them to visit their doctor**:[15,16]

Are they aged 40 or older?

☐ **YES (+1)** ☐ **NO**

Do they smoke?

☐ **YES (+1)** ☐ **NO**

Do they take medication for high blood pressure?

☐ **YES (+1)** ☐ **NO**

Do they regularly drink alcohol?

e.g., more than 6 drinks per week

☐ **YES (+1)** ☐ **NO**

Do they regularly eat unhealthy foods?

e.g., sugary drinks or cereals, white bread, processed meats, salty foods

☐ **YES (+1)** ☐ **NO**

Do they exercise regularly?

e.g., Walk for 30 minutes at least five days a week

☐ **YES** ☐ **NO (+1)**

Are they overweight?

e.g., waist size of more than 80cm (31.5in) for most women or more than 94cm (37in) for most men

☐ **YES (+1)** ☐ **NO**

TOTAL SCORE:

(a score of 2 or more means this person could be at risk of prediabetes or T2D)

Start the conversation about prediabetes and T2D risk within your family and encourage those at-risk to visit their doctor

If you're unsure, you can visit our quick and simple online symptom checker to find out if your family are at risk of having prediabetes orT2D

Following the conversation, visit your healthcare provider

Testing is the simple part

Prediabetes or T2D is typically diagnosed following a routine blood test which can be arranged through your doctor.[17]

The results would usually be available a few days later.[17]

These would show if your family member has diabetes or not as well as if they are at risk of developing the condition.[17]

If your family member is diagnosed or found to be at risk, your doctor should offer support and share information on managing the condition effectively

What the doctor will discuss with your family member during their appointment depends on the diagnosis and the treatment they recommend.[18]

Generally, they'll talk about:[18]

- What prediabetes is
- What diabetes is
- What high blood sugar means for health
- Setting a target for blood sugar levels
- Regular checks and tests needed to keep healthy
- How to get more information about prediabetes or T2D
- Whether medicine is needed
- Any necessary lifestyle changes, for example alcohol, smoking diet or exercise

Families need to talk, and you're the one who can help them start

You can protect your family from prediabetes and T2D. Here's how you can begin:

1 Talk to your family about their risk of prediabetes and T2D

2 Encourage at-risk family members to visit their doctor and get tested for prediabetes and T2D

3 Help your loved ones make positive lifestyle changes to maintain or improve their health

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For more information on prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, visit **www.everystepindiabetes.com**

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