# Week 1

## Subject: Why you should care about diabetes

If you don’t know much about diabetes, you’re not alone. Diabetes can be a difficult disease to understand. And there are a lot of myths about the disease. For example:

* If you don’t eat a lot of sweets, you can’t get diabetes (false!)
* Diabetes can’t kill you (false!)
* Everyone with diabetes is on insulin (false!)

Once you understand the disease and dispel the myths, you can better defend yourself against it. That’s right: the most prevalent form of diabetes, type 2 diabetes, is preventable. And even if you’re diagnosed with diabetes, it’s a highly manageable disease.

But undiagnosed diabetes can cause terrible damage to your body over time.[[1]](#footnote-1) Here are some of the long-term risks: blindness, nerve damage, hearing loss, gum disease, decreased ability to fight infections, amputation of lower limbs, renal failure, heart attacks and stroke.1

Diabetes is also associated with an increased risk of cancer of the liver, pancreas, endometrium (in women), colon/rectum, breast and bladder.1

There are also specific risks for women with diabetes who are pregnant, and women who are pregnant who develop what is called “gestational diabetes.”1

Over the next few weeks, be on the lookout for additional information on our campaign: *Take control of diabetes: Eat, move and monitor!* campaign.

# Week 2

## Subject: I don’t have diabetes…do I?

You can have diabetes and not know it. And the longer it goes undiagnosed, the more damage it can do to your body.[[2]](#footnote-2)

But here’s the good news: there are very accurate blood tests for diagnosing diabetes. Be sure to ask your healthcare provider about the tests for diabetes or to go over the results of past tests together.

Your doctor can also tell if you have “prediabetes.” This essentially means that your blood glucose levels are higher than normal. This doesn’t mean that you’ll develop diabetes, but you will need to take action to improve your health. One of the most important things to remember about type 2 diabetes is that you have a good chance of preventing it if you make changes in your lifestyle including your diet, exercise routines and even better managing your stress levels.

Here are some examples of other ways you can reduce your risks of developing type 2 diabetes: [[3]](#footnote-3)

* You can eat healthier by using the Plate Method - a guide to how you load up your plate
* Consistent exercise over strenuous activity. Consistency matters more than higher intensity when working out!
* Brightening your mood can help your body control blood glucose levels (and exercise and healthier eating can help brighten your mood!)
* Take care of your feet: they can show symptoms of diabetes

And lastly, here’s some good news! Go ahead and order your favorite dessert at a restaurant—just split it with your dining partners. Any healthy diet may include desserts as long as you think “moderation” instead of “restrictions.”2

# Week 3

## Subject: My doctor says I’m prediabetic

Your healthcare provider might tell you that you’re prediabetic, because the same blood tests are used to screen for prediabetes and diabetes. Don’t panic if you receive this diagnosis—but don’t ignore it, either.

Being prediabetic doesn’t mean you’re mildly or slightly diabetic. In fact, it doesn’t mean that you’re diabetic at all, or that you’re guaranteed to progress to diabetes.

Here’s what you can expect with a diagnosis of prediabetes:

* Your healthcare provider will probably want you to be retested annually.
* If your test(s) reveal you are at high risk for diabetes, your doctor may strongly advise you to make lifestyle changes starting immediately. For example, if you are overweight, your doctor will likely want you to change the types and portions of food you eat to help get your numbers back down to normal levels. This doesn’t necessarily mean a drastic weight loss! Just 10 to 15 pounds can make a difference with diabetes management.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Here are the tests and results (ranges) that your doctor may use to diagnose prediabetes and diabetes:[[5]](#footnote-5)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Diagnostic Tests** | **Prediabetes** | **Diabetes** |
| Fasting glucose test (fasting means at least 8 hours with no food or beverages containing calories) | Plasma\* glucose value of  100 mg/dL (5.6 mmol/L) to  125 mg/dL (6.9 mmol/L) | Plasma glucose value  \_126 mg/dL (7.0 mmol/L) |
| Two-hour oral glucose tolerance test | Plasma glucose value of  140 mg/dL (7.8 mmol/L) to  199 mg/dL (11.0 mmol/L) | Plasma glucose value  \_200 mg/dL (11.1 mmol/L) |
| Casual (random)\*\* glucose test | Plasma glucose value of  140 mg/dL (7.8 mmol/L) to  199 mg/dL (11.0 mmol/L) is  suggestive of prediabetes | Symptoms\*\*\* of hyperglycemia (high blood glucose) and a plasma glucose value  \_200 mg/dL (11.1 mmol/L) |
| A1C\*\*\*\* | 5.7 to 6.4% | A1C \_6.5% |

*Notes:*

*\*Glucose and blood glucose are used interchangeably in this chart. Plasma is the yellow liquid component of blood in which the blood cells are suspended. Plasma is the whole blood without the blood cells. Blood test results typically report glucose values in terms of plasma glucose.*

*\*\*Casual (random) is defined as any time of day without regard to time since last meal.*

*\*\*\*Symptoms of hyperglycemia (such as increased urination and thirst and unexplained weight loss) must be present to make a diagnosis of diabetes when using casual (random) plasma glucose values.*

*\*\*\*\*The A1C test should be performed in a laboratory using a method that is certified and standardized.*

If you have any questions or are concerned you may be at risk for prediabetes or diabetes, it’s best to talk to your healthcare provider.

# Week 4

## Subject: Managing diabetes successfully

Diabetes is a chronic disease. There’s no cure.1 But it is a condition that you can live with and manage successfully. Here are ways to help lower your blood glucose levels and elevate your mood.[[6]](#footnote-6)

* There’s no one-size-fits-all diet for diabetics. With the help of your healthcare provider, once you understand how your body processes glucose, you’ll discover tremendous flexibility in how and what you eat.
* Keeping your blood glucose levels in a healthy range—monitoring your numbers as directed by your healthcare professional and remembering to your medications —can help prevent or delay complications.
* Exercise can also keep your numbers stable. A regular exercise routine should include aerobic (or cardio), strength, stretching and balance (especially if you’re older).

These are other self-care practices to consider as well:1

* Learn ways to prevent or deal with stress, which can have an effect on your blood glucose levels
* Ask your healthcare provider about getting an annual flu shot, as well as other vaccinations (such as pneumonia and hepatitis B)
* Get an annual eye exam
* Get cancer screenings as recommended for your age and gender
* Take care of your feet, especially if you have poor circulation and numbness (note: consult your healthcare provider for detailed information on foot care)
* See your dentist twice a year for teeth cleaning; brush and floss between meals; report any gum sores, swelling or bleeding to your dentist immediately
* Have your blood pressure checked whenever you see your healthcare provider

Ask your healthcare provider if you should have any additional preventive tests, screenings, medications or treatments based on your specific circumstances.

1. World Health Organization, "Global Report on Diabetes,” 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. World Health Organization, "Global Report on Diabetes,” 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. American Diabetes Association, “Living Healthy with Diabetes. A Guide for Adults 55 and Up,” 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. American Diabetes Association, “Living Healthy with Diabetes,” 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, “Know Your Blood Sugar Numbers: Use Them to Manage Your Diabetes,” March 2016 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. American Diabetes Association, “Living Healthy with Diabetes,” 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)