



The Top 5 Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes

by AFRA WILLMORE

Type 2 Diabetes Risk Factors

If you are reading this, you are probably already concerned that you or someone you love is at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

It might be you are worrying for nothing, but if there is even the smallest chance your fears could be grounded in fact, it's vital to see a doctor. If they diagnose diabetes, work can start on lowering the impact and possibly preventing further health complications.

Type 2 diabetes can develop slowly, often with few symptoms and unless you know what you are looking for it can take up to ten years to be diagnosed which increases the likelihood of developing potentially serious secondary conditions including heart disease, neuropathy, and eye or sight issues.

It's worth knowing some of the risk factors and how you could reduce the likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes.

Five Type 2 Diabetes Risk Factors to Be Aware Of

Common type 2 diabetes risk factors may include:

Age

The risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases with age. Middle-aged and seniors are most likely to develop the condition. This is probably due to the onset of "middle-aged spread" and a less energetic lifestyle.

Weight

It's not true that only overweight people develop type 2 diabetes, but it is true that being overweight increases your risk of developing it. Body shape also can indicate risk – those with an "apple" shape are more likely to develop diabetes.

Waist size is a really good indicator. Even if your BMI is in the "normal" range, having a waist size of 31.5 inches or over for women; 35 inches or above for Asian men and 37 inches or over for white and black men, increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes significantly.

Lifestyle

Smoking, drinking, overeating and leading a sedentary life all increase your chances of developing the condition.

Race

People of different racial and ethnic groups are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes. African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Native-Americans, Native-Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Asian-Americans have a higher risk because statistically, they are more likely to be overweight.

Family History

If your parents, your child/children or siblings have type 2 diabetes, unfortunately, that means you are at higher risk of developing the condition too. Even more distant relatives having diabetes increases risk so speak to aunts, uncles, and cousins to map where diabetes has been diagnosed. No family history does not guarantee you won't develop the condition, however.

How to Reduce Your Type 2 Diabetes Risk

There's not much you can do about some of these risk factors, but you do have some control over the others. Act in good time, and you could avoid developing the condition altogether, or limit the damage caused by undiagnosed diabetes.

Make Lifestyle Changes

Take a brave step and analyze your lifestyle. Step on the scales, measure your waist and be honest about just how much you might be smoking or eating. And are you doing any meaningful exercise? Walking from the car to the bakery doesn't count!

It's never too late to make changes to your lifestyle and lower not only the risk of type 2 diabetes but that of heart disease and stroke too.

If you smoke or chew tobacco products you really should quit. There are lots of techniques to help from hypnotherapy to nicotine replacement patches. If you need motivation beyond the health benefits, save up the money you would have spent on cigarettes and other tobacco products and plan a treat using the money you have saved by quitting smoking.

Change Your Diet

No one loses out by eating a healthy diet so cutting down on processed, fatty, sugary food will be good for your whole health and for any other people who eat with you. It's a myth that eating sugary food "brings on" diabetes, but the weight-gain that eating sugary food brings could.

Try to incorporate more fruit and vegetables and heart-healthy fish like mackerel, herring, salmon, and anchovies into your diet. Cut down on red meat and try to reserve greasy take-outs and burger drive-thrus for an occasional treat.

Exercise More

Increasing your exercise levels is easier than you think. Simply parking further away from the mall entrance or getting off the bus a few stops earlier than usual and walking further will help.

Aim to walk 10,000 steps each day. Devices which track your steps and exercise levels are cheaper than ever before, and for as little as \$20 you could discover just how far you are walking and aim to beat the previous day's count. More expensive devices usually have more functions but a basic step-counter is better than nothing.

You might find your smartphone has the capacity to measure steps and other exercises too. There are lots of apps to help you reach your daily or weekly exercise goal. Some of them combine with a food tracker so you can really see your progress and feel proud of your hard work.

Get Regular Check-Ups

Most importantly ask at your doctor's office about getting a comprehensive health check-up to include a blood test for diabetes or prediabetes, especially if you have one or more of the type 2 diabetes risk factors above. You should have this kind of check-up regularly, increasing in frequency as you age.

Remember, prevention is better than cure and even if you are diagnosed with prediabetes you can make changes to avoid developing full-blown diabetes.