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SELF-CARE INFORMATION ON PRE - DIABETES

Understanding Pre-Diabetes: A Guide to Protecting Your Health

What is Pre-Diabetes?

Pre-diabetes means your **blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough** for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. It is detected using **HbA1c blood tests** or **fasting glucose tests**.

Why is Pre-Diabetes Important?

- **Heart Disease Risk:** You are **twice as likely** to develop heart disease, high blood pressure, and strokes.
- **Diabetes Risk: 1 in 3 people (33%)** with pre-diabetes develop **type 2 diabetes within 6 years** if no action is taken.
- **The Good News:** With lifestyle changes, your risk **drops to just 13%**—you can **take control of your health!**

💡 **Think of pre-diabetes as a warning light**—your body is giving you a chance to prevent future health problems.

What Can You Do to Lower Your Risk?

- ✓ **Have an annual blood glucose (HbA1c) test** to monitor your progress.
- ✓ **Eat in a way that stabilises blood sugar**—more **fibre, protein, and whole foods**.
- ✓ **Lose 5-10% of your body weight**—even a small amount makes a big difference.
- ✓ **Be physically active**—aim for **at least 150 minutes per week**.
- ✓ **Reduce stress and prioritise sleep**—both impact blood sugar control.
- ✓ **Quit smoking & limit alcohol**—to protect blood vessels and metabolism.

Lifestyle: The Most Powerful Way to Reverse Pre-Diabetes

1. Nutrition: What to Eat & What to Avoid

Key Principles:

- ✔ **Balanced meals:** Include **lean protein, high-fibre carbohydrates, and healthy fats.**
- ✔ **Limit ultra-processed foods:** The more natural your food, the better.
- ✔ **Portion control:** Even healthy foods can raise blood sugar if eaten in excess.

Better Carbohydrate Choices

Carbohydrates **impact blood sugar** the most, so choose wisely:

Reduce These...	Choose These Instead...
White bread, white pasta, sugary cereals	Wholegrain bread, wholewheat pasta, porridge, brown rice
Chips, fried potatoes	Baked, boiled, or sweet potatoes
Sugary drinks (cola, energy drinks)	Water, herbal tea, diet drinks
Cakes, biscuits, pastries	Fresh fruit, plain yoghurt, nuts

💡 **Tip:** Look for foods that **don't cause big blood sugar spikes**—whole foods **digest more slowly and keep you full longer.**

Cutting Back on Sugar

Too much sugar leads to **cravings, weight gain, and energy crashes.** Try these swaps:

Reduce These...	Choose These Instead...
Sugar in tea/coffee	Cinnamon, vanilla extract, or artificial sweeteners
Sweets & chocolates	Dark chocolate (70%+), fresh fruit, nuts
Jam, honey, syrup	Sugar-free jam or a small portion of regular jam
Sugary cereals	Porridge, Weetabix, Branflakes

Healthy Fats for Better Blood Sugar Control

Fat is essential—but **the type of fat matters**:

Reduce These...	Choose These Instead...
Butter, lard, palm oil	Olive oil, avocado, nuts
Deep-fried food	Grilled, baked, steamed food
Processed meats (sausages, pies)	Lean meats, skinless chicken, fish


2. Weight Management: Small Losses, Big Benefits

Losing **just 5% of your body weight** can:

- ✓ Lower blood sugar levels
- ✓ Improve cholesterol
- ✓ Reduce heart disease risk
- ✓ Help prevent type 2 diabetes.

Realistic Weight Loss Goals

- Aim to lose **1–2 lbs (0.5–1 kg) per week**—slow, steady weight loss is best.
- **Forget crash diets**—instead, focus on **long-term habits**.
- **Make one small change at a time** (e.g., swap fizzy drinks for water).

 **Tip:** Track your meals, steps, and habits—it helps identify patterns and motivates progress.

3. Physical Activity: Move More, Feel Better

Exercise **improves insulin sensitivity** and **lowers blood sugar naturally**.

How Much Exercise Do You Need?

- ✓ **150 minutes per week** (30 minutes, 5 days per week) of moderate activity.
- ✓ **Strength training twice a week** (e.g., lifting weights, resistance bands).
- ✓ **Daily movement**—take the stairs, park further away, do housework!

Great Activities for Pre-Diabetes

- ✓ Brisk walking
- ✓ Swimming
- ✓ Cycling
- ✓ Dancing
- ✓ Strength training

💡 **Tip:** Find an activity **you enjoy**—it's easier to stick with it long term!

4. Sleep & Stress: The Overlooked Factors

Did you know **poor sleep and chronic stress increase blood sugar**?

Better Sleep for Blood Sugar Control

- ✓ Aim for **7-9 hours per night**—your body regulates glucose better when well-rested.
- ✓ Avoid screens before bed—blue light affects melatonin.
- ✓ Keep a **consistent sleep schedule**.

Managing Stress

- ✓ Practice **breathing exercises, yoga, or mindfulness**.
 - ✓ Get outside—nature **reduces stress hormones**.
 - ✓ Talk to friends or professionals for support.
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5. Smoking & Alcohol

- ✓ **Quit smoking**—it worsens insulin resistance and damages blood vessels.
- ✓ **Limit alcohol:**

- **Men:** No more than **3 units/day** (21 per week).
 - **Women:** No more than **2 units/day** (14 per week).
 - Have at least **two alcohol-free days per week**.
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Where to Get Support


- 📌 **NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme:** www.england.nhs.uk/diabetes/prevention/
- 📌 Health lifestyles Gloucestershire: www.hlsqlos.org/
- 📌 Ask your local pharmacist
- 📌 Call the practice on **01285 653184** or **01285 653122**
- 📌 If you require **urgent** medical advice, call 111 (24 hours)
- 📌 **In an emergency call 999**

💡 **Remember:** Even **small changes** today will **protect your future health!**

References & Further Reading

 **Diabetes UK:** Comprehensive information on diabetes management and prevention.

- Website: www.diabetes.org.uk
- Helpline: 0345 123 2399

 **Diabetes.co.uk:** Community support and educational resources.

- Website: www.diabetes.co.uk

 **NHS Diabetes Information:** Official health information and guidance.

- Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/diabetes