5 tips to prevent and manage diabetes

We know there’s a lot of diabetes information out there so we’ve put together these five simple steps to steer you in the right direction and help you take charge of your health:

1. **Find out if you’re at risk** for developing type 2 diabetes by completing the Canadian Diabetes Association’s online free risk assessment test at [SunLifeAgainstDiabetes.ca](http://SunLifeAgainstDiabetes.ca). It only takes two minutes!

2. **Eat a nutritious diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables**, paying close attention to how you cook your food, portion control, serving size and meal planning. **Healthful hint:** When buying produce, go for the darkest, greenest or most colourful fruits and vegetables; that’s where you’ll generally find the most nutrients.

3. **Get moving.** Physical exercise is anything that causes your body to burn calories. Regular exercise improves your body’s sensitivity to insulin and helps manage the sugar levels in your blood. **Healthful hint:** You don’t need a gym to be active. You can build exercise into your day by walking up the stairs, getting off the bus/subway a few stops early, playing with your kids or vacuuming the house. The trick is to do something for 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

4. **Watch your weight.** Working toward or maintaining a healthy Body Mass Index (24 or less) and waist circumference (less than 40 inches for men and 35 inches for women) can prevent/manage diabetes, improve sugar levels in your blood, reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke and improve your energy and stress levels. **Healthful hint:** A well balanced plate consists of 1/4 protein, 1/4 starch and 1/2 vegetables. Add a bowl of fresh fruit and you’re all set!

5. **Reduce excessive stress.** Do you feel stressed all the time? Regardless of the stressors (money, work, personal) your body is not designed to be in a state of chronic stress. It can cause high blood pressure, compromise your

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**Diabetes by the numbers**

- There are **four types of diabetes** – pre-diabetes, type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes.
- Eleven million Canadians are living with diabetes or prediabetes. Learn more at [diabetes.ca/about-diabetes](http://diabetes.ca/about-diabetes).
- Almost **six million** Canadians have pre-diabetes.
- Almost one million Canadians have type 2 diabetes and don’t know it.
- **Ninety percent** of all diabetes cases are type 2 and can be prevented or managed.
- The number of Canadians living with diabetes has more than doubled since 2000 and will grow by a staggering 40 percent by 2025.

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**Life’s brighter under the sun**

**Diabetes awareness is good...Action is better**

November is Diabetes Awareness Month. Being aware of this disease is an important first step, but taking action to prevent or manage this condition may help in living a healthy and long life.
immune system, increase blood sugar levels and contribute to anxiety and depression. Finding ways to manage stress (enjoyable exercise, getting enough sleep, learning how to cope with upsetting events, reaching out to close family and friends or speaking with a professional) will work wonders towards lowering your stress levels and will help you maintain a healthy lifestyle.7 Healthful hint: Many people, health experts included, believe yoga can help manage diabetes. At the very least it can help you reduce stress, enhance mobility, lower blood pressure and be happier.8

More tips for managing your diabetes

Even if you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, you can still take steps to manage this condition:

- You are the most important member of your health management team. Only you know how you feel.
- Work with and stay connected to your health care team.
- Create a personal blood sugar testing plan.
- Take good care of your feet. For people with diabetes, poor foot health can result in other serious complications. Check out this information from the Canadian Diabetes Association for more on foot health.

If not treated or managed correctly, diabetes can result in serious complications including heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, impotence and amputation. It’s worth adopting at least some of these steps to prevent or manage diabetes!