



On Call® Advisor Understanding Pre-diabetes

Understanding Pre-diabetes: Signs, Symptoms and Treatment

Pre-diabetes doesn't have to progress to type 2 diabetes. Find out what the condition means and how you can keep your blood glucose levels in check.

What is Pre-diabetes?

Healthcare professionals sometimes refer to pre-diabetes as impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG), or both, depending on the type of test used for detection and diagnosis.

Impaired fasting glucose (IFG)

Blood glucose that is higher than normal blood glucose, but below the diagnostic threshold for diabetes after fasting (typically after an overnight fast). Sometimes termed impaired fasting glycaemia.

Impaired glucose tolerance (IGT)

Blood glucose that is higher than normal but below the diagnostic threshold for diabetes, after ingesting a standard amount of glucose during an oral glucose tolerance test. Fasting and two-hour glucose values are needed for its diagnosis.

589 million
people worldwide
have diabetes



**There are no clear symptoms of pre-diabetes.
The only reliable method of diagnosis is to have blood tests done.**

Diagnosing Pre-diabetes: How to know If I Have It?

	Normal	Pre-diabetes	Diabetes
Fasting glucose	<6.1 mmol/L (<110mg/dL)	6.1-6.9 mmol/L (110-125 mg/dL)	≥7.0 mmol/L (≥126mg/dL)
Two-hour plasma glucose level after oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT)*	< 7.8 mmol/L (<140 mg/dL)	7.8-11.0 mmol/L (140-199 mg/dL)	≥11.1mmol/L (≥200 mg/dL)

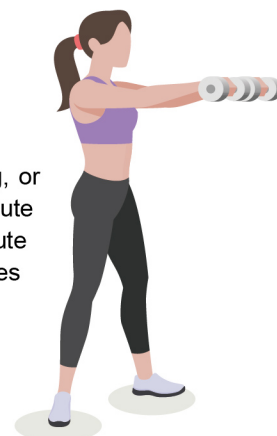
*OGTT (oral glucose tolerance test): 75g of glucose is given to a patient after an overnight fast; blood glucose levels are checked (1) before the ingestion of glucose and (2) two hours after the ingestion of glucose

What Can I Do to Help Myself If I Have Pre-diabetes?

Lifestyle changes coupled with modest weight loss (5 to 10 percent of body weight) and moderate-intensity physical activity (~30 minutes daily) are recommended.

How to Exercise

Strive for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise weekly through activities like brisk walking, cycling, or strength training. To make it sustainable, break sessions into manageable blocks—for example, a 30-minute daily walk, a 15-minute bodyweight routine (e.g., squats and planks) three days a week, and a 25-minute weekend swim. Combining aerobic and resistance exercises not only boosts metabolism but also enhances energy levels and long-term health resilience.



Other Lifestyle Tips

“Before people develop type 2 diabetes, almost all of them pass through the stage of pre-diabetes where their blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be considered as frank or overt diabetes,” says Dr Goh Su Yen, Head and Senior Consultant, Department of Endocrinology, Singapore General Hospital (SGH), a member of the SingHealth group.

Having pre-diabetes means that you are likely to develop type 2 diabetes in the near future. You can, however, take steps to reduce these risks.

Some people may experience a few symptoms associated with diabetes, such as:

- Excessive thirst and frequent urination
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Blurred vision



You should start any new activity slowly, increasing the intensity levels and duration of each activity gradually as you become accustomed to the routine.

It has been shown unequivocally that structured programs and intensive lifestyle modification programs can help people learn proper techniques, establish goals and stay motivated, and lead to a sustained reduction in the conversion of pre-diabetes to overt type 2 diabetes.

Reference:

IDF Diabetes Atlas, 11th edition, 2025



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