

## Tips for Teens

# Lower Your Risk for Type 2 Diabetes

National Diabetes Education Program



Today, more teens  
than ever before  
have type 2 diabetes.

Have  
more energy,  
more fun, and  
feel good  
about yourself!

*Take action now...* **check out tips**  
**to lower your risk** ➔

# Be active, eat well, and lower your risk!

## What is type 2 diabetes?

Diabetes means that blood glucose (GL00-kos), also called blood sugar, is too high. Glucose comes from the food we eat and is needed to fuel our bodies. Glucose is also stored in our liver and muscles. Your blood always has some glucose in it because your body needs glucose for energy. An organ called the pancreas (PAN-kree-as) makes insulin (IN-suh-lin). Insulin helps glucose get from your blood into your cells. Cells take the glucose and turn it into energy.

If you have diabetes, the pancreas makes little or no insulin or your cells cannot use insulin very well. Glucose builds up in your blood and cannot get into your cells. If blood glucose stays too high, it can damage many parts of the body such as the heart, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.

If you have type 2 diabetes, you may need to take insulin or pills to help your body's supply of insulin work better. Type 2 used to be called "adult onset diabetes." Now more teens are getting type 2, especially if they are overweight.

be  
active

## How can I lower my risk for getting type 2 diabetes?



There are several ways to lower your risk:

- Stay at a **healthy weight**.
- Be more **physically active**.
- Choose to eat the right amounts of **healthy foods**.
- Follow the ideas on this tip sheet and share them with your friends and family. They are good for everyone's health.

## What puts you at risk?

You are at risk if you:

- are overweight
- don't get enough physical activity
- have a mom, dad, or other close relative who has type 2 diabetes
- are American Indian, Alaska Native, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American, or Pacific Islander



**FACT: Eating too much sugar does not cause diabetes.**

## How will physical activity help?

Like eating well, physical activity can help you feel good. Being physically active may:

- help you control your weight, build lean muscle, and reduce your body fat
- strengthen your bones
- increase flexibility and balance
- improve your self-esteem and mood
- help you sleep better
- help you focus in school
- improve your teamwork skills through sports



## Know the warning signs:

If you have type 2 diabetes, you might:

- urinate a lot
- be very thirsty
- lose weight without any reason
- feel tired
- have patches of thick, dark skin that feels like velvet on your neck or under your arms

Some teens do not notice any of these warning signs. They find out they have diabetes when they go to their doctor for a check-up.

## What can I do to be m

Okay, let's get started:

- **Set small goals at first.** Do not get upset if you can not do a lot or if you get out of breath at first. Keep moving! Any amount of activity will help. Add more activity each week until you reach your goal.
- **Aim for at least 60 minutes everyday.** You don't have to do it all at once—20 minutes at a time, three times a day is okay, too. There are lots of ways to be active. Go for a walk, ride a bike, dance, play ball, or shoot hoops. Choose what you like best, then do it!

**What can I eat?** “Your Healthy Food Guide” gives ideas about what kinds of foods are good for you. Remember, this is only a guide. Talk with your doctor or dietitian about making a meal plan just for you.

## Your Healthy Food Guide

### Vegetables



Choose **dark green and orange** vegetables as often as you can.

**Aim for 2½ to 3 cups a day.** Here are choices that equal **1 cup:**

- 1 cup cut up raw or cooked or vegetables
- 2 cups leafy salad greens
- 1 cup vegetable juice

### Fruits



Choose **fresh whole** fruits as often as you can.

**Aim for 1½ to 2 cups a day.** Here are choices that equal **1 cup:**

- 1 cup cut up raw or cooked fruit
- 1 cup fruit juice
- ½ cup dried fruit

### Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs, and Nuts



**Aim for 5 to 6 ounces a day.** Here are choices that equal **1 ounce:**

- 1 ounce lean meat, fish, or chicken
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- ½ ounce nuts
- ¼ cup cooked dry peas or beans such as kidney, white, split, or blackeye
- ¼ cup tofu

### Regular Soda, Candy, Cookies, and Desserts



If you choose to eat these foods, have a very small amount and **not every day.**

### Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese



**Aim for 3 cups a day.** Here are choices that equal **1 cup:**

- 1 cup nonfat or low-fat milk or yogurt
- 1½ ounces cheese

### Breads, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta



Choose **whole grain** foods for at least **3 of your 6 choices.**

**Aim for 6 to 7 ounces a day.** Here are choices that equal **1 ounce:**

- ½ cup of cooked cereal
- ½ cup cooked rice or pasta
- 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal
- 1 slice of whole grain bread
- ½ small bagel or 1 small muffin

### Heart-healthy Fats



**One serving is**

- 1 teaspoon vegetable, olive, or canola oil
- 1 teaspoon tub margarine
- 5 large olives or ⅓ avocado
- 1 tablespoon low-fat mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons low-fat salad dressing

**How much should you eat?**

You get most of the fat your body needs from other foods you eat—so choose only a few extra servings of these heart-healthy fats each day.

Source: USDA ([www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov))

**How much should I eat?** The amount of food you need to eat each day varies with your age, sex, height, and activity level. The amounts in “Your Healthy Food Guide” are right for girls age 11 to 17 or boys age 11 to 14 who get 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity each day. If you are a boy older than 14, or if you want to enter your own height or activity level, visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

**Limit your screen time.** Turn off the TV and get moving! Several studies have found that teens who watch a lot of TV have more body fat than those who watch TV less than two hours a day.

## more physically active?

- If you are overweight, **check with your doctor** before you start a physical activity program.
- **Be active every day.** Physical activity should be part of your daily life. Play sports, take P.E. or dance, or other exercise classes—check out your local Y for some ideas. Get from place to place by walking or biking. Take the stairs whenever you can.



**Try to cut some calories.** If you cut **100 to 200** calories a day, it can make a big difference.

If you:	You could cut about:
Drink water instead of regular soda or a sweetened fruit drink	<b>150 calories</b>
Eat a piece of fruit instead of a candy bar or a bag of chips	<b>200 calories</b>
Eat a small serving of french fries or share a big one	<b>250 calories</b>
Eat one half cup of sugar-free, nonfat pudding instead of regular ice cream	<b>150 calories</b>



## Try these healthy eating tips.



- Take your time when you eat. It takes about 15 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you are full. So, wait 15 minutes before eating second helpings.
- Do not skip meals. Eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, plus a snack. You will have a ready supply of energy and not get too hungry.
- For breakfast, try one or two slices of whole grain toast with a tablespoon of peanut butter, a hard-boiled egg, or a piece of low-fat cheese, along with a glass of low-fat or nonfat milk.
- Make a sandwich with turkey or lean beef for lunch. Use mustard or a little low-fat mayonnaise.
- Snack on a small bowl of whole-grain cereal with low-fat or nonfat milk and a piece of fruit.
- Don't "super-size" it! Order smaller, kid-sized meals and drink water or low-fat or nonfat milk. Share a larger meal with a friend.
- Fill up half of your plate with salad or vegetables. Use small amounts of low-fat salad dressing, mayonnaise, or margarine.

## What's in it for me?

If you lower your risk for type 2 diabetes, you will:

- have more energy
- feel good about yourself
- be healthy now and in the future

**Take action now.** Use the ideas in this tip sheet to stay healthy and lower your risk for type 2 diabetes.

## Are studies being done about type 2 diabetes?

Yes, studies are being done to learn ways to help prevent and manage type 2 diabetes in kids and teens.

**The SEARCH for Diabetes in Youth Study** is finding out how many kids and teens have type 2 diabetes. [www.searchfordiabetes.org](http://www.searchfordiabetes.org)

**The TODAY Trial** is finding the best ways to treat type 2 diabetes in kids and teens. [www.todaystudy.org](http://www.todaystudy.org)

**The HEALTHY Study** is testing a program to lower risk factors for type 2 diabetes in middle school students.

## Learn more!

### Check out...

**National Diabetes Education Program** for more about diabetes [www.YourDiabetesInfo.org](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org)  
1-888-693-NDEP

**American Diabetes Association** for help to manage diabetes [www.diabetes.org/planetD](http://www.diabetes.org/planetD)  
1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)

**American Dietetic Association** to find a dietitian near you [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) • 1-800-366-1655

**Bam! Body and Mind** website for help to stay healthy [www.bam.gov](http://www.bam.gov)

**Children With Diabetes** website for more about kids and families with diabetes [www.childrenwithdiabetes.com](http://www.childrenwithdiabetes.com)

**MyPyramid.gov** for more about healthy eating and being active [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

**National Association for Health and Fitness** that promotes physical activity [www.physicalfitness.org](http://www.physicalfitness.org) • 1-716-583-0521

**National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse** for more about diabetes [www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov) • 1-800-860-8747

**President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports** that promotes physical activity [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov)  
1-202-690-9000

**USDA Team Nutrition** to make healthy food choices and stay active [www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardkids](http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardkids)

**VERB** for cool and fun ways to be active every day [www.verbnow.com](http://www.verbnow.com)

**WIN – Weight-control Information Network** for weight control help

• *Take Charge of Your Health! A Teenager's Guide to Better Health*

[www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/take\\_charge.htm](http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/take_charge.htm)  
1-877-946-4627

### Special thanks to the teens who helped create this tip sheet

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[www.YourDiabetesInfo.org](http://www.YourDiabetesInfo.org)

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