

Understanding prediabetes and diabetes risk factors

Many Americans with diabetes haven't yet been diagnosed and aren't aware of the health risks.¹ We're here to support and empower you to be your healthiest self. Diabetes is a condition where the body can't make insulin, or doesn't use it well. Insulin is a hormone that helps our bodies use the energy from the glucose in the food we eat. Without it, glucose levels in the blood stream can become too high.

Over time, this can cause damage to body tissue and organs.¹ There are three main types of diabetes.¹

- **Type 1 diabetes** can affect anyone, but most often it develops in children or young adults. People with this type of diabetes produce very little insulin, or none at all. There is no way to prevent or cure type 1 diabetes.
- **Type 2 diabetes** is the most common type. People with type 2 diabetes either make too little insulin, or their bodies aren't able to use it as they should.
- **Gestational diabetes (GDM)** is a form of diabetes that appears during pregnancy. While GDM usually goes away after pregnancy, it can put women and their babies at higher risk for type 2 diabetes.





Preventive care — including A1C, cholesterol, and blood pressure screenings — can lower your risk of health conditions like diabetes and improve your well-being. Use the **Find Care** tool on the **SydneySM Health** app or **anthebluecross.com** to locate a nearby doctor in your plan's network and save on costs.

Prediabetes risk factors for type 2 diabetes

If you have prediabetes, it means your blood glucose (sugar) levels are higher than normal — but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes.²

While it is not clear why some people develop prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, and others don't, these risk factors can increase the risk of prediabetes, including:²

- Being overweight or inactive.
- Being 45 or older.
- Having a family history of type 2 diabetes.
- Having had diabetes during pregnancy.
- Being Black, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic, or Pacific Islander American.

Symptoms of diabetes

If you have any of the following diabetes symptoms, see your doctor about having your blood sugar tested:³

- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Thirst
- Weight loss without trying
- Hunger
- Blurred vision
- Numbness or tingling in your hands or feet
- Fatigue
- Dry skin
- Sores that heal slowly
- More infections than usual

Preventing type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a serious, chronic health condition that can lead to other serious health issues, such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, and kidney failure. If you can prevent or even delay type 2 diabetes, you can lower your risk for those other conditions.⁴

You can usually prevent or delay type 2 diabetes with achievable lifestyle changes, such as:^{4,5,6}

- Exercising regularly.
- Maintaining a healthy weight.
- Eating a healthy diet.
- Quitting smoking.

Having regular doctor appointments can also help you prevent, diagnose, or manage type 2 diabetes. To find a doctor, please visit **anthebluecross.com** or call us at the Member Services phone number on the back of your member ID card.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Diabetes Basics* (May 15, 2024); cdc.gov.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Diabetes Risk Factors* (May 15, 2024); cdc.gov.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Symptoms of Diabetes* (May 15, 2024); cdc.gov.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *About the Lifestyle Change Program* (May 15, 2024); cdc.gov.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: *Tips From Former Smokers: Smoking and Diabetes* (October 13, 2023); cdc.gov.

⁶ National Library of Medicine: *International Diabetes Federation: a consensus on Type 2 diabetes prevention* (accessed April 15, 2025); pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

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