

What Is Prediabetes?

If your doctor says that you have prediabetes, it means your blood glucose levels are high. However, they are not quite high enough to say you have diabetes. Without any intervention, many people with prediabetes could develop type 2 diabetes in five years.

It can be scary to hear this kind of news from your doctor. But you are not alone. About one in three U.S. adults has this condition. Why? Our lifestyle now involves less movement and more high-calorie foods, making more of us overweight and obese. Being heavy is a risk factor for prediabetes. So is not exercising.

HOW DOES MY DOCTOR KNOW I HAVE PREDIABETES?

Prediabetes often does not have any signs. In fact, many people don't even know they have it. Doctors may test their patients' blood glucose if they have several factors that increase their chances of having prediabetes. Besides your weight, having a family member with diabetes also increases your odds. People with high blood pressure and high cholesterol are also at risk.

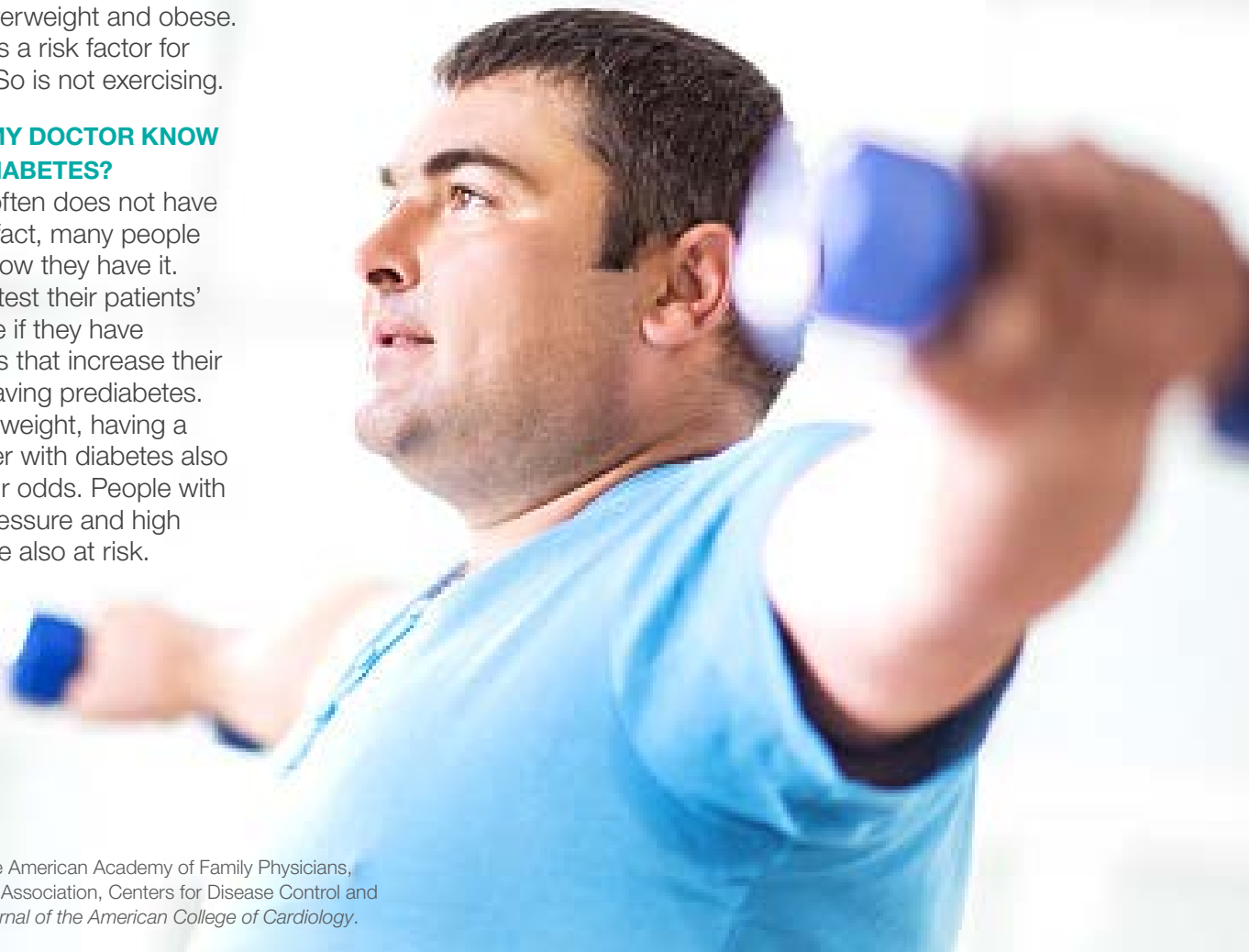
CAN IT CAUSE HEALTH PROBLEMS?

If you have prediabetes, you are more likely to get diabetes. Your doctor will test you for diabetes regularly. He or she may also tell you to take medicine to control your blood glucose.

You are also at risk for heart disease and stroke. Diabetes can cause blindness, kidney disease, eye disease, skin problems, nerve damage and other serious issues.

HOW CAN I PREVENT DIABETES AND PROTECT MY HEALTH?

The most important treatments for prediabetes are exercise and weight loss. You don't have to reach your ideal body weight. Just losing 10 to 20 pounds can reduce your risk. Also aim to get 30 minutes of exercise at least five times per week. Finally, choose healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains.



Sources include the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Diabetes Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.