# Week 1

## Subject: Why you should care about diabetes

If you don’t know much about diabetes, you’re not alone. Diabetes can be a difficult disease to understand. And there are a lot of myths about the disease. For example:

* If you don’t eat a lot of sweets, you can’t get diabetes (false!)
* Diabetes can’t kill you (false!)
* Everyone with diabetes is on insulin (false!)

Once you understand the disease and dispel the myths, you can better defend yourself against it. That’s right: the most prevalent form of diabetes, type 2 diabetes, is preventable. And even if you’re diagnosed with diabetes, it’s a highly manageable disease.

But undiagnosed diabetes can cause terrible damage to your body over time.[[1]](#footnote-1) Here are some of the long-term risks: blindness, nerve damage, hearing loss, gum disease, decreased ability to fight infections, amputation of lower limbs, renal failure, heart attacks and stroke.1

There are also specific risks for women with diabetes who are pregnant, and women who are pregnant who develop what is called “gestational diabetes.”1

Over the next few weeks, be on the lookout for additional information on our campaign: *Take control of diabetes: Eat, move, and monitor!* campaign.

# Week 2

## Subject: I don’t have diabetes…do I?

You can have diabetes and not know it. Most early symptoms are from higher than normal levels of glucose, a kind of sugar, in your blood. And the longer it goes undiagnosed, the more damage it can do to your body.[[2]](#footnote-2)

But here’s the good news: there are very accurate blood tests for diagnosing diabetes. Be sure to ask your healthcare provider about the tests for diabetes or to go over the results of past tests together.

Your doctor can also tell if you have “prediabetes.” This essentially means that your blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed with diabetes. People with prediabetes are at an increased risk for developing diabetes in the future. From the moment a person develops prediabetes, his or her risk of developing damage to the arteries also starts to increase. Damage to the arteries can cause heart attacks, strokes, blindness, kidney damage and other serious problems. 2

Having prediabetes doesn’t mean that you’ll definitely develop diabetes, but you will need to take action to improve your health. One of the most important things to remember about type 2 diabetes is that you have a good chance of preventing it if you make changes in your lifestyle including your diet, exercise routines and even better managing your stress levels. Lifestyle management, especially losing weight if you are overweight and exercising regularly, is the foundation of managing prediabetes and preventing type 2 diabetes.2

Here are some examples of other ways you can reduce your risks of developing type 2 diabetes: [[3]](#footnote-3)

* Eating healthier by using the Plate Method – a guide to how you load up your plate
* Consistent exercise over strenuous activity. Consistency matters more than higher intensity when working out!
* Brightening your mood can help your body control blood glucose levels (and exercise and healthier eating can help brighten your mood!)
* Taking care of your feet: they can show symptoms of diabetes

And lastly, here’s some good news! Go ahead and order your favorite dessert at a restaurant—just split it with your dining partners. Any healthy diet may include desserts as long as you think “moderation” instead of “restriction.”3

# Week 3

## Subject: My doctor says I have prediabetes

Your healthcare provider might tell you that you have prediabetes, because the same blood tests are used to screen for prediabetes and diabetes. Don’t panic if you receive this diagnosis—but don’t ignore it, either.

Having prediabetes doesn’t mean you have mild diabetes. In fact, it doesn’t mean that you have diabetes at all, or that you’re guaranteed to progress to diabetes. [[4]](#footnote-4)

Here’s what you can expect with a diagnosis of prediabetes:

* Your healthcare provider will probably want you to be retested annually.
* You may be asked to implement new healthy lifestyle choices, as these can help you bring your blood sugar level back to normal or at least keep it from rising toward the levels seen in type 2 diabetes. 2
* It is also important to maintain a healthy weight through exercise and healthy eating. Exercising at least 150 minutes a week and losing about 7% of your body weight may prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. 2

If you have any questions or are concerned you may be at risk for prediabetes or diabetes, it’s best to talk to your healthcare provider.

# Week 4

## Subject: Managing diabetes successfully

Diabetes is a chronic disease. It is a condition you can live with and manage successfully.1 Here are ways to help keep you on track:

* There’s no one-size-fits-all diet for people with diabetes. With the help of your healthcare provider, you’ll discover tremendous flexibility in how and what you eat. 1
* Keeping your blood glucose levels in a healthy range—monitoring your numbers as directed by your healthcare professional and remembering to take your medications —can help prevent or delay complications. 1
* Fitness is another key to managing type 2. And the good news, all you have to do is get moving. The key is to find activities you love and do them as often as you can. No matter how fit you are, a little activity every day can help you put yourself in charge of your life.1

Ask your healthcare provider if you should have any additional preventive tests, screenings, medications, or treatments based on your specific circumstances.

1 American Diabetes Association, "Standards of Medeical Care in Diabetes - 2020," Diabetes Care, January 2020

1. World Health Organization, "Diabetes,” accessed at www.who.org, June 8, 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/guide/understanding-diabetes-symptoms, accessed on March 22, 2021

   2 American Diabetes Association, "Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes - 2020," Diabetes Care, January 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3 https://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-risk/prediabetes/myths-about-diabetes, accessed on March 22, 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 1 American Diabetes Association, "Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes - 2020," Diabetes Care, January 2020

   2 https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/symptoms-causes/syc-20371444, accessed on March 22, 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)