

# Don't **RISK** diabetes

## What can you do to lower your risk of developing type 2 diabetes?

While you cannot change risk factors like age and genetic background, you can do something about being overweight, your waist measurement, how active you are, eating habits, or smoking.

You should maintain your body weight within a healthy range, especially if there is type 2 diabetes in your family. It is important not to put on weight, especially around your waist. Reducing your waist circumference reduces your risk of type 2 diabetes.

Maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active and following a healthy eating plan can reduce a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes by up to 60 per cent.

### Reducing your waist circumference

If you need to lose weight you should consistently use more energy than you consume over a period of time.

The most effective and safest way to lose weight is gradually. It is also more likely to result in you keeping weight off. Try to develop a plan and make a few small changes to your lifestyle, one or two at a time.

Be realistic. Too many sudden changes, will result in a lifestyle that you will find difficult to maintain.

### Reducing energy input

Look at your current diet.

Some small changes in the types and amount of food you eat can help to reduce your energy intake.

### Some suggestions include:

- Eat smaller portions.
- Eat fewer energy dense foods. Foods like cakes, biscuits, processed breads and cereals and confectionery, have a large amount of energy for a given weight.
- Replace energy dense foods with fruits, vegetables, legumes and wholegrain cereals. These are less energy dense and you will tend to feel satisfied for longer.
- Drink plenty of water and less soft drinks, flavoured mineral waters and fruit juices.
- Choose low fat dairy products.
- Choose fish, lean meats and chicken without skin, and avoid processed meats. Replace some meat in mixed dishes with legumes, such as beans, lentils or chickpeas.

### Increasing your energy output

There are two main kinds of physical activity: planned activity (regular exercise) and incidental activity (the kind you do as you go about your daily tasks).

## Don't be the **TYPE** to leave it too late

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### **Increase incidental activity by:**

- Walking or cycling to school with the kids instead of driving. This is also a good way to help reduce the congestion around your children's schools.
- Taking public transport if you can. You will probably be able to build in some incidental activity at either end.
- Walking or cycling to the shops instead of using the car.
- Leaving the car an extra stop (or more) from where you catch public transport and walking. You may find you can also reduce your parking costs.
- Using fewer time ('energy') saving gadgets and devices around the house. Include planned physical activity if you can.

### **Here are some tips:**

- Find an activity you enjoy. Walking is usually the easiest and requires no special equipment or facilities, other than a good comfortable set of shoes. You may also enjoy alternatives such as swimming or cycling.
- If you decide to take up walking, a pedometer, a simple gadget that measures the number of steps you take, can help you set goals and work out whether you are achieving them.

You can use it to measure both planned and incidental activity.

- Reward yourself when you achieve your goals. You will be surprised how quickly you can increase your activity levels.
- Enlist the support of family, friends and pets to help keep you motivated. They will benefit too.
- If you enjoy group activities, consider enrolling in one of the wide variety of group classes and programs offered by community health centres, fitness centres, dance studios and other facilities.

- Focus on health and not just weight loss. This will take time. Even if you are not losing weight, you may be reducing your risk of developing type 2 diabetes and other health problems. Other benefits of the extra activity: being able to do more, better mental health, even saving money on petrol and parking and helping to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

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