



WAKE-UP CALL

Type 2 diabetes is one of the most prevalent diseases in America. It's also one of the easiest to prevent. Here's how to fight back.

— JAYME MOYE

12.6 million, or 10.8 percent, of all women age 20 years or older have diabetes

— AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 79 million Americans over the age of 20 have prediabetes — higher-than-normal blood glucose levels that can lead to type 2. In case the magnitude of that number is not registering, it's huge. It means that if current trends continue, one in three adults will be diabetic by 2050. Who will it be: you, your partner, or your best friend?

Fortunately, it's not too late to choose "none of the above." Prediabetes can be reversed by making healthy diet and lifestyle choices. Even with a family history of type 2, the disease can be prevented altogether by eating smart and exercising.

Follow these five tips from diabetes experts Caroline Cederquist, MD, the Clinical Director of the Cederquist Medical Wellness Center in Naples, Fla., and Amy Kranick, a Nashville-based Registered Dietician and Certified Diabetes Educator with Diabetes Care Club:



GET MOVING

Everyone needs to exercise for 30 minutes a day, five days a week, no excuses (with doctor approval, of course), according to Kranick. "Treat exercise as a prescription for blood sugar control and weight management," she says. Cardio will help use up excess glucose in the blood, and strength training will increase lean muscle mass — tissue that's been proven to help regulate glucose even when you're not in the gym.



EAT THREE MEALS A DAY

Kranick reports a common pattern in people who develop type 2 diabetes: they skip breakfast (a cup of coffee doesn't count as a meal) and snack after dinner. Break the mold by eating a healthy low-carb breakfast that contains protein. If that doesn't curb your appetite for post-dinner indulgences, try adding a low-carb snack (like a handful of nuts) between lunch and dinner.



CHILL OUT AND CATCH YOUR Z'S

Stress impacts all of us daily. The real question, according to Cederquist, is what are you doing to manage it? Living in a constant state of stress raises your cortisol levels, a hormone that forces the body to store fat — a risk factor for type 2. Lack of sleep over a prolonged period has the same risky effect.



SUPPLEMENT YOUR DIET

Cederquist recommends chromium for staving off glucose sensitivity, as well as magnesium and vitamin D, both of which have been proven to decrease the risk of diabetes. She also suggests omega-3s — fatty acids that help lower triglyceride levels, an early marker for the insulin resistance associated with type 2.



LIMIT YOUR SUGARS

Keep glucose levels healthy in your blood by moderating the amount of sugar in your diet. Google "glycemic index" for charts rating the simple sugar levels of common foods and replace the high glycemic foods (70 and above) in your diet with low (less than 55) or medium (55-69). Check labels and eliminate any products containing high-fructose corn syrup — a processed sugar that Cederquist says doesn't metabolize correctly and has been linked with type 2.