

Getting Prediabetes Under Control

September 26 2021 7:15 AM



PEORIA - Most people have heard about diabetes and the potentially serious impact it can have on one's health. But prediabetes, which might not be as well-known, should also be on your radar. Prediabetes is a precursor to diabetes that puts a person at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

But the good news is that it can be controlled through lifestyle changes before it turns into an even bigger problem.

"Prediabetes is a serious health condition where the blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but they're not in a high enough range to be considered type 2 diabetes," says

Tanya Munger, nurse practitioner for OSF HealthCare Endocrinology. "Roughly one in three Americans have prediabetes and 84 % of those people don't even know that they have it."

According to Munger, people can have prediabetes for years without any warning until more serious health problems crop up. The biggest problem is the signs and symptoms of prediabetes can be subtle, or may not exist at all.

Risk factors include:

- Having a parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes
- Being overweight
- Being 45 years or older
- Lack of exercise or living a sedentary lifestyle

"In prediabetes, the pancreas is working harder and harder to make more insulin to keep up and eventually it can't keep up and that's when it develops into type 2 diabetes," says Munger. "Some of the things that contribute to it is a lack of exercise, we really need to engage in physical activity, modifying our diet is another thing, being obese and having a family history of type 2 diabetes."

Diabetes affects every major organ in the body. In addition to increased risk of heart disease and stroke, diabetes can cause kidney failure, blindness, nerve damage, and even depression. That's why Munger strongly encourages her patients with prediabetes to stay physically active by engaging in 150 minutes of exercise a week, whether it's a brisk walk, yard work or simply marching in place while watching TV.

"Roughly 25 % even up to 30 % of patients with prediabetes can develop type 2 diabetes and that happens pretty quickly," says Munger. "If you've been told you have prediabetes and you don't start making those lifestyle modifications or changes, it can convert into type 2 diabetes within three to five years."

Munger adds that health care professionals have a tremendous opportunity and obligation to educate their patients about the seriousness of prediabetes. She says it's not enough to tell patients they need to make changes but to give them specific recommendations of things they can do to prevent prediabetes from becoming a more problematic type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

"Type 2 diabetes is a full-time job with no weekends, no holidays, and on your sick days you're working overtime," says Munger. "It really impacts every aspect of your life and that does impact your quality of life as well. So if we can prevent it you're going to be in a lot better shape."

For more information on diabetes care, visit [OSF HealthCare](#).