

## November is National Diabetes Month: What you need to know about Prediabetes

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), there are 1.5 million Americans that are diagnosed with diabetes every year. 9.4% of our population (or 30.3 million Americans) currently live with diabetes. But before people develop type 2 diabetes, they almost always have “prediabetes”, blood glucose levels that are higher than normal but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. There are no clear symptoms of prediabetes, so, you may have it and not know it.

Not everyone who has prediabetes will develop type 2 diabetes. For some people, early treatment can actually return blood glucose levels to the normal range. This is where knowing your risk factors comes in to play.

- Did you know that men are more likely than women to have undiagnosed diabetes? One reason may be that they are less likely to see their doctor on a regular basis.
- Have you ever been diagnosed with gestational diabetes? This is a type of diabetes that develops during pregnancy and then goes away after pregnancy, but women who have had it are at an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- What about family history? A family history of diabetes could contribute to your risk.
- Have you ever been diagnosed with high blood pressure? Having high blood pressure contributes to your overall risk.
- How old are you? As we age, our risk increases.
- Are you physically active? Being inactive can increase your risk for type 2 diabetes.
- Do you know your Body Mass Index or BMI? People with higher BMIs are at a higher risk.

If you have some or all of these risk factors, it is important to talk to your physician about testing your blood sugar. A finger stick glucose test can tell you what your blood glucose level is at the time of testing. An A1C blood test can measure your average blood glucose for the past 2 to 3 months. Depending on your risk factors, your physician can determine if testing is necessary and which type of testing would be best for you in addition to helping you develop a plan of action to lower your risk factors! Newman Memorial Hospital also offers appointments with Registered Dietician, Ruth Ann Givens, M.S., RD/LD for nutritional guidance of managing blood sugar and reducing your risk. Make it a point to talk to your physician and take control! Through medication, nutrition and education we have the power to change the course of diabetes in our community.