

A Step in the Right Direction: Lose Weight & Lower Your Risk for Type 2 Diabetes

[by the National Diabetes Education Program](#)

With so many weight loss programs available, it is easy to become confused about what works and what does not when it comes to losing weight to lower your risk for type 2 diabetes. The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) wants you to know that you don't have to knock yourself out to lower your risk – in fact, the findings of a major study show that modest weight loss can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes *by more than half*. Here are some proven small steps developed by NDEP to help you make gradual lifestyle changes to lose weight safely and keep it off.



Small Step #1: Set a weight loss goal you can meet before starting a weight loss plan. Aim to lose about 5 to 7 percent of your current weight – that's 10 to 14 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds. Keep track of your daily food intake and physical activity in a log book and review it daily to see how you are doing. For support, invite family and friends to get involved.

Small Step #2: Make healthy food choices every day. Keep healthy snacks such as fruit on hand at home. Pack healthy lunches so that your family can take charge of what they eat during the day. To make sure you get enough fiber, eat more fruit and select a mix of colorful vegetables. Drink low-fat or nonfat milk or choose low-fat cheese. Choose whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, brown rice, pasta, or oatmeal. Select lean meats and poultry. Vary your protein choices by choosing more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.

Small Step #3: Strive to become more physically active. If you are not active, start off slowly and choose a physical activity you will stick with most days of the week. Slowly add more time until you reach at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity five days a week. Build physical activity into your day. Take a brisk walk during lunchtime. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, or park farther away from your office. Join a community program like The Y as a family and choose activities that everyone can enjoy such as swimming, water aerobics, or dance classes. Keep at it and remember to celebrate small successes.

For a free copy of *Your GAME PLAN to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes: Information for Patients* in [English](#) or [Spanish](#), which includes a fat and calorie counter and physical activity tracker, plus more tips to help you lower your risk for type 2 diabetes, contact the National Diabetes Education Program at 1-888-693-NDEP (6337) or visit www.YourDiabetesInfo.org and click on the *Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent Type 2 Diabetes.* campaign.

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