



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

Choose to Live Disease-Free By Managing Your Diabetes

Tens of thousands of Idahoans have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes and diabetes, a chronic disease with very serious health consequences. The good news is that healthy lifestyle choices can greatly improve the quality of life for all those facing this diagnosis.

Deb Filler, a project manager in the Department of Health and Welfare's Information Technology Division, is an example of how making the kind of healthy lifestyle changes recommended by the Department's Idaho Diabetes and Prevention Control Program can really make a difference.

After a lifetime of unhealthy eating and little physical activity, Filler found herself diagnosed with type-2 diabetes at age 45. Four years later, after adding daily exercise to her routine and changing her eating habits with the help of a diabetes educator, Filler is 92 pounds lighter and diabetes free.

Filler's diagnosis is not unique. More than 72,000 adults in Idaho have been diagnosed with diabetes and more than 80,000 Idaho adults have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes, a precursor to full-blown diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Filler hopes her story of how she's controlling her chronic illness with diet and exercise will inspire others facing pre-diabetes and diabetes to do the same.

"The good news is that pre-diabetes can be managed or even reversed by increasing physical activity, adopting healthier eating habits and losing weight," says Mimi Hartman-Cunningham, the program manager of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Idaho Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. "Research tells us that three out of four adults who have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes are overweight. At the same time, a weight loss of as little as 5 to 7 percent can reduce your risk of getting diabetes by 58 percent."

Pre-diabetes is a diagnosis given when your blood sugar is higher than normal, but not high enough to be diagnosed as type-2 diabetes. It's a warning sign that you could be on your way to developing full-blown diabetes.

Now is a great time to contact your healthcare provider to talk about your risk for developing pre-diabetes and diabetes. Those at risk for type-2 diabetes include people who are overweight, older than 65, have high blood pressure, get little or no physical activity, have a family history of diabetes and have diabetes during pregnancy or have had a baby weighing more than nine pounds.

It's also important for those who have received a pre-diabetes or diabetes diagnosis to take control of their health. Hartman-Cunningham has this advice on how to reduce your risk of developing diabetes or serious diabetes-related complications if you've already been diagnosed with the disease:

- Eat a well-balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables that is low in saturated fat.
- Watch portion sizes.
- Add daily physical activity to your life.

To improve her health, Filler initiated daily walks. Now she runs on her lunch hour. She also carefully controls what she eats throughout the day, snacking on fruit and nuts and working plenty of veggies into her meals.

"I consider type-2 diabetes a disease of choice," says Filler. "The choices I made got me there. The choices I am making got me through it. The choices I will make will determine whether I get the disease in the future."

For more information, visit www.diabetes.org