

Weight Loss Can Help You Lower Your Risk for Diabetes and Pre-diabetes

Most adults with diabetes are overweight. If you're one of them, weight loss can improve blood sugar levels and decrease the need for diabetes medications. If you have pre-diabetes, you may lower your risk diabetes by losing some pounds. Other potential benefits of weight loss include:

- Reduced blood pressure
- Better heart function
- Improved cholesterol levels

“It even can help you live longer,” says Susi K. Lewis, MA, RN, CPHQ, Project Coordinator with the MOVE! Program at the VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. The MOVE! Weight Management Program helps Veterans lose weight, keep it off, and improve their health. “Losing weight is one of the most important actions you can take to prevent cardiovascular disease, which is the cause of death for nearly 70 percent of people with diabetes.”

Slim-Down Secrets

Now that you know why it is important to lose weight, here are a few strategies about how you can get started:

- **Step on the scale.** The MOVE! Program recommends weighing yourself daily.
- **Break the fast.** Eating a morning meal may be linked to lower weight. In a study of more than 5,000 people with diabetes, those who ate breakfast 7 days a week had a lower body mass index (BMI) than those who sometimes skipped it.
- **Get smart about fast food.** If you hit the local burger joint, choose wisely. “Most fast food places offer salads, fruit, and grilled chicken sandwiches,” Lewis says. “Hold the mayo and the cheese and ask for salad dressing on the side. Maybe eat just part of the bun and use mustard. Skip the cola and get unsweetened iced tea or water. All these little changes add up.”
- **Write it down.** One study showed that people who kept a daily food diary lost significantly more weight than those who didn't. “Use your records to identify opportunities for change in your diet,” Lewis advises. “Look at what you eat and how active you are, and start making small changes. You don't have to give up your favorite foods, just cut back the amount. Also, record your physical activity. You may not be ready for a marathon, so just start walking a block or two and increase gradually.” For more information on how exercise improves your health when you have diabetes, read [this](#) Veterans Health Library (VHL) article.

- **Savor your progress.** When you choose to eat a healthier meal over an unhealthy one, or when you take a 10-minute walk instead of going for a bag of potato chips when you are feeling stressed, know you are on your way to implementing small changes that will pay off.
- **Learn more.** Find out how to set your daily calorie goal with this MOVE! handout, [The Basics of Weight Control](#). “The basic idea of weight loss never changes. You need to burn more calories than you take in,” says Lewis.

MOVE! Coach App

Even better, download MOVE! Coach, a new weight management app from VA! Designed to help Veterans independently manage their weight, MOVE! Coach guides users through a 19-week program, providing all the tools and information they need for success. Getting the app is simple, too—it’s currently available for download from the Apple App Store, and all Veterans need to use it is an iPhone or iPad with iOS version 6.0 or higher. For more information, click [here](#).

More Help and Inspiration

Check out these VHA videos to inspire your weight-loss efforts:

- [MOVE!® Strive for a Healthy Weight](#)
- [MOVE!® Eat Wisely](#)
- [MOVE!® Be Physically Active](#)

And for additional information on living well with diabetes, make the VHL [go-to-guide](#) your go-to resource.