

Lifestyle Recommendations and Counseling for Prediabetes



This job aid provides a summary of lifestyle changes and counseling strategies to incorporate into health promotion counseling that can help clients in the family planning setting delay or prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes.

Lifestyle Recommendations for Prediabetes¹

 **ENJOY IT!**

 **AVOID IT!**

Set small, achievable goals and celebrate even small wins. Choose to be kind to yourself.²

Avoid negative self-talk. Instead, your inner voice should be a friend and ally.

Replace caloric beverages with water.

Reduce caloric beverages, especially those that contain sugar such as soda, sweet tea, sweetened coffee, and alcohol.

Eat a wide range of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and healthy proteins like nuts, beans, eggs, fish, chicken, and low-fat dairy.

Avoid processed and high-fat meats such as bacon, hot dogs, and sausage.

Individuals capable of becoming pregnant should get at least 400mcg of folic acid every day to help prevent certain birth defects. This can come from a daily multivitamin, or by eating a diet with plenty of fortified grains and foods like beans, peas, and leafy greens.³

Use heart-healthy fats like canola, soybean, and olive oils.

Reduce foods with saturated fats such as butter, chicken skin, coconut oil, and bacon grease.

Include food that may help improve insulin sensitivity, like nuts, coffee, tea, beans, oats, barley, berries, and yogurt.

Avoid low-nutrient foods such as cookies, chips, toaster pastries, and added sugars.

Use herbs, spices, and spice blends with no added sodium.

Steer clear of excess salt, including high-sodium packaged food, fast food, and restaurant food.

Aim for adequate sleep: 7–8 hours sleep nightly

Avoid too little sleep.

Focus on healthy strategies—exercise and techniques such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and meditation—for stress management.

Reduce unhealthy habits used to manage stress, such as tobacco, alcohol, other substance use, and stress eating. Seek professional support to treat substance use disorders and other health issues.

Engage in cardiovascular exercise (like walking, biking, and swimming) for at least 150 minutes weekly. Integrate strength training, which includes lifting weights or using your body weight 2–3 times weekly.

Reduce physical inactivity.

Break up long periods of sitting with 2–3 minutes of activity every 30 minutes.

Avoid long periods of sitting.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *National Diabetes Statistics Report, 2020*. Atlanta, GA.

² <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/living-forward/201603/4-ways-stop-beating-yourself-once-and-all>

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/folicacid/features/folicacid-prevents-ntds.html>

Counseling for Success for Prediabetes

Clients with overweight or obesity who lose 7–10% of their initial weight markedly reduce their risk for prediabetes.

TRY THIS

Approach the conversation as a collaboration and ask permission before bringing up a client's weight or suggesting lifestyle changes. Brainstorm solutions together.

Ask open-ended questions to learn more about your client's perspective, rather than leading the conversation with your perspective.

Start with the client's motivation for change. Before offering advice, ask questions that help the client explore some personal reasons to change. Help the client link their answers to positive behavior change. A healthy pregnancy—or having more energy to take care of kids—can be a powerful motivator for change.

Highlight what the client has done well and support their motivation for change around their successes. Use positive language and avoid shaming when discussing diet, weight, and health behaviors.

Approach conversations from the client's point of view. When trying to stretch limited financial resources, for instance, satisfying hunger may outweigh other considerations like the nutritional value of affordable foods.⁴ Discuss strategies that are realistic for the client; offer resources and referrals for additional support. Making recommendations that the client is unable to implement can increase stress, guilt, and frustration.

Be specific and use examples.

Encourage clients to commit to one specific small behavior change. Choose goals that are attainable. Offer to brainstorm ideas if necessary. Be specific. Some examples:

- I will eat a fruit and/or vegetable every day at lunch.
- I will walk for at least 5 minutes every day after lunch.
- Instead of soda in the afternoon, I'll drink unsweetened tea.

IT SOUNDS LIKE THIS

"May I talk with you about your health risks?"

"Would you like to hear about some things you can do today to ensure a healthy pregnancy in the future?"

"How do you feel about your weight?"

"What is important to you?"

"What would you like more of in your life?"

"What would you like less of in your life?"

"It's great that you've replaced soda with water at lunch! Now that you've taken that step, what's one more small change you could make to eat a healthier lunch?"

"Do you worry that your food will run out before you get money to buy more?"

"I understand the need to stretch your dollars at the grocery store. Could your budget work by replacing some processed foods with less expensive ones that have more nutrients, like beans or sweet potatoes?"

"Avoid sugary drinks, such as soda, juice, lemonade, fruit punch, and sweet tea."

"I'm asking everyone who comes in to consider picking one small change for the better. What's something you might like to change?"

⁴ Journal of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners 30 (2018) 201–207, © 2018 American Association of Nurse Practitioners.

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