



July 11, 2015 – Grand Rapids, MI

Prediabetes: What Now?

The messages this week have talked about the risk factors for prediabetes and how many people don't know what they are. It's time to change that, at least in those of you who read the messages. Please feel free to pass them along to anyone you feel might also be unaware.

How do you know if you're actually prediabetic? It requires a blood test for a specific protein called HbA1c. This protein indicates the amount of sugar that's been in your blood stream for the past 90 days. The number for your blood sugar might be fine; it could be less than 100 mg/dl if you did the blood test fasting as it should be. But you can't fool the HbA1c test: it measures the percentage of hemoglobin that's coated with sugar, which shows what's been going on for the past 90 days. In other words, you can't get a good reading by cleaning up your act for a few days before the test.

Your HbA1c should be less than 5.6%. If it's over 6.5%, you're a diabetic but if it's between 5.7 and 6.4%, you have prediabetes. If you fall into that range, your HbA1c is elevated and without taking action, you **will** become a diabetic.

I recommend that you get a blood insulin test to assess your risk as well: the higher your fasting blood insulin, the greater the risk of type 2 diabetes. It should be less than 8.0 mm/ml. You might as well have all the information as you tackle your prediabetes. And don't kid yourself, you're not taking these tests so your doctor has the info—you're getting the info for yourself. You know what the numbers should be and you know you'd better take action if they're not in that range, because diabetes is much more serious than just a reason to take another pill.

What should you do if the tests show that you're prediabetic? You're in a better position than most because you're no longer unaware; you know you have a problem that needs to be addressed. You can't get any younger and you can't change your family history, but you can lose weight and exercise. You don't have to do anything extreme. Just follow the advice I give you all the time: Eat less. Eat better. Move more. Let's add one more word: **now!**

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: Am J Preventive Med. 2015. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2015.03.007>.



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