

Make small changes for better health

(Family Features) When it comes to health, making positive lifestyle changes is a goal for many people. But often times no matter how good the intentions, these changes only last a few weeks.

Most people know what they need to do to improve their health — taking steps like making smart food choices and being more active. It's figuring out how to do these things and fitting these changes into the daily routine that can present the biggest challenges.

Maintaining a healthy weight and staying active can help lower risk for developing a number of chronic diseases, including diabetes. Losing even 10 to 15 pounds — if you weigh 200 pounds — can make a big difference in helping you prevent type 2 diabetes. If you have diabetes, these same changes can help keep your blood glucose and blood pressure on target to reduce your risk for diabetes complications. The National Diabetes Education Program wants all Americans to know that learning how to make these positive lifestyle changes begins with making a plan to achieve your goals.

Make a plan

To reach your goal, you need a plan. How do you get started? Take these steps:

- Think about what is important to your health. What are you willing and able to do?
- Decide what your goals are. What changes do you want to make? Choose one goal to work on first.
- Decide what steps will help you reach your goal.
- Pick one step to try this week.

For example, if one goal is to lose weight, ask yourself these questions to help you shape your plan:

- Why haven't I made this change before? Example: I don't have time to go to an exercise class or a gym.
- How can I work around what gets in the way? Example: I can do something on my own that doesn't take much time and is low cost or free.
- What's my goal? Example: I want to exercise 30 minutes a day, at least 5 days a week.
- Here's what I need to get ready: _____ Example: I need to take walking shoes to work and ask a friend to walk with me.



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

When it comes to better health, making lifestyle changes can be a family affair.

- What might get in the way of making this change? Example: In bad weather, I won't want to walk outside. I can walk inside instead.
 - Here's how I'll reward myself: _____ Example: If I stick with my plans this week, I'll watch a movie.
- It is hard work to make and sustain lifestyle changes. The healthy choice isn't always the easy one, but it is worth it. And with the right plan in place and support from family and friends, you can make healthy changes that will last a lifetime.

When you are ready to create a plan for making

changes in your life, visit NDEP's Diabetes HealthSense (www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/HealthSense). You also can order or download free resources to help you manage or prevent diabetes by visiting the NDEP website at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org.

Coping with your feelings

If you are living with a chronic disease such as diabetes, it's common to feel overwhelmed, sad, or angry. If you are at risk for type 2 diabetes, you may also be struggling with taking steps to prevent or delay the onset

of the disease.

The tips below can help you cope:

- Recognize that you are not alone.
- Find time for yourself even when you are busy.
- Connect with others - find support from family and friends.
- Find balance in your life. Juggling many roles and responsibilities can leave little time for you.
- Ask your health care team for help if you are having difficulty coping with stress and negative feelings.

Latecia's story: Making healthy changes as a family, one step at a time

"When I decided to lose weight, my first step was to get active," said Latecia Turner, who is working to prevent type 2 diabetes by managing her weight. "I made a plan to walk with my mother, to get out and play football with my daughters, and to take regular bike rides with my husband."

Because Latecia's mother has type 2 diabetes, Latecia and her daughters have a greater risk of developing the disease. To prevent the disease, they are working as a family to make lifestyle changes.

Latecia decided that managing her weight, eating

healthy, and becoming more active were important goals for herself and for her family. So, she made an appointment with her doctor to discuss her family history of diabetes as well as to help her make a plan and set some goals to help her make healthy lifestyle changes.

To manage her weight, Latecia allows herself the foods she loves while controlling the portion she eats of each. To eat a healthier diet, she fries less of the food she prepares; buys fewer processed foods that are high in fat and calories; and she no longer adds salt to the food she eats. To be more active, she and her family play football, dance, and go for walks together.

Not only is Latecia making those changes for herself, she's making sure her family — especially her kids — take those changes to heart in order to prevent the family history of diabetes from continuing in future generations.

Watch a video of Latecia telling her story, in her own words, at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/HealthSense.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Diabetes Education Program is jointly sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with the support of more than 200 partner organizations.

Change is possible with self-awareness

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promote satiety. An excellent choice in vitamins is one that includes 1000 IUs of vitamin D3. Another suggestion for a supplement is calcium. Calcium helps to build strong bones but much research has now shown that it also helps us to burn fat when dieting as well. Omega 3 is an essential fat which is too often missing in our diets.

Omega 3s are found in fatty fish and most people don't get enough of this. Omega 3 fats are important for your heart health and in reducing inflammation. There is much research out there as well that Omega 3s also help you to burn body fat as well.

Make sure you are getting enough protein in your diet. Protein is very important in your diet. Protein helps you to feel fuller

longer. It also helps you to protect your precious muscle tissue. Remember you want to burn fat and you want to protect muscle tissue. Because muscle tissue allows you to burn more calories even while at rest. More muscle means a higher metabolism.

Remember to continue to reassess your circumstances. Self awareness is key for successful long term change. Of course, al-

ways check with your doctor before starting any new exercise and eating program. Start learning and get started. Remember 65-75 percent of all disease is preventable ... U R in Charge!

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