



## Defusing The Diabetes Bomb

*By Joe Stein, President*



The Fitness and Wellness Command Center has just raised the threat level to Code Orange, one level below Code Red--imminent attack. The bad news is forty percent of Americans between ages 40 and 74 are carrying the ticking time bomb of pre-diabetes, the precursor of diabetes. This stealthy attacker can lead to a dangerous array of health problems. Nerve impairment, kidney problems and blindness are among the most common complications. The good news is *you* are now in training to be your own bomb disposal expert. Hoo-ya, commandos, welcome to class.

According to the Clinical Exercise Specialist Manual from the American Council on Exercise, diabetes is a disorder that disrupts protein and fat metabolism. Generally speaking, people with diabetes have an elevated blood glucose level that results from deficient insulin secretion, insulin action, or both. Fasting blood glucose levels over 125 mg/dl are considered diabetic. If you are over 40 and do not know your number or know that “mg/dl” means milligrams of glucose per deciliter of blood, your first mission is to arm yourself with information: make a doctor appointment.

Pre-diabetes is a condition where blood sugar is elevated between 100 and 125 mg/dl. It is important to know if your blood sugar falls in this range because there is a good chance you will have full-blown diabetes in ten years if left untreated. In important research conducted by the Diabetes Prevention Program, over 3000 middle-aged men and women with pre-diabetes were studied over a three-year span. One group in the study exercised 30 minutes a day and followed a low-fat diet in order to reduce their weight by 7%. This equates to 10 ½ pounds for a 150 person. The next group took Glucophage, a medication often prescribed for diabetes. The last group took a placebo.

The findings offer hope and a roadmap to manage this warning shot across your brow. Thirty percent of the pre-diabetes placebo group developed full-blown diabetes. Twenty two percent of the Glucophage group developed diabetes. In a most heartening finding, only 14% of the exercise and weight reduction group developed diabetes.

If your doctor diagnoses you with pre-diabetes, the Department of Fitness Defense advises the following action plan:

- 1) Meet with a Registered Dietitian to develop a healthier eating plan. Calories from fats and highly refined carbohydrates should be reduced. According to a recent study in *Diabetes Care*, high-fiber carbohydrates can reduce the risk of diabetes. Whole grains and vegetables can be especially beneficial.

- 2) Stop smoking. Tobacco is an enemy agent.
- 3) Start a program of cardio training. The right blend of mild to moderate cardiovascular conditioning benefits you in multiple ways. First, even walking a half-hour a day will burn some calories and lead to steady, gradual weight loss. Additionally, cardio helps control blood sugar levels.
- 4) Pump iron. Strength training will build the muscle mass necessary to increase metabolic rate, thus facilitating long-term weight loss. In addition, some insulin action takes place in the metabolically active muscle.

Even if you have not been diagnosed with pre-diabetes, following the above plan can only help you live a healthy and fit life. If you need help getting into gear, I would be delighted to send you a complimentary list of ten simple changes you can make everyday to get started immediately. So, fitness commandos, get a good night's sleep. Tomorrow you ship out to fight the good fight.

---

Joe Stein, B.S., M.B.A., is a certified personal trainer, weight management and lifestyle consultant and owner of Renaissance Fitness & Wellness. Call 732.345.5151 or e-mail [Joe@RenaissanceFitness.com](mailto:Joe@RenaissanceFitness.com) with questions or to receive a complimentary fitness consultation and session.