

New Connections to Better Health

How Connecting with a Lifestyle Coach Is Preventing Diabetes, Stroke, and Heart Disease

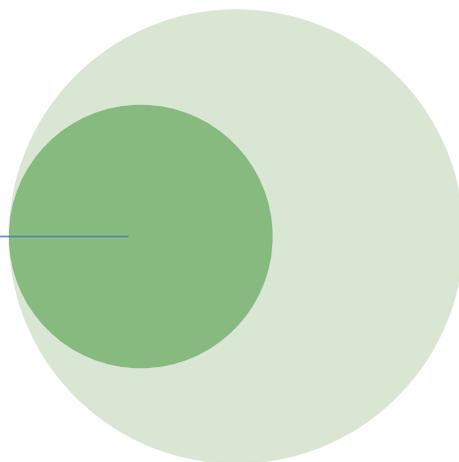
The latest information from academic, health care, and public health sectors show that by connecting previously separated efforts and programs—physical activity, nutrition, disease prevention—we can help people live healthier lives.

The Chronic Disease Prevention Program within the Wisconsin Department of Health Services uses a multidisciplinary approach designed to create lasting connections and positive outcomes. This approach aligns with the Wisconsin implementation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Diabetes Prevention Program for at-risk adults.

The National Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) is a year-long, evidence-based program focused on instilling long-term lifestyle changes through education, group support, and the one-on-one guidance of specially trained lifestyle coaches. Working together, we've helped people around the state lose weight, make healthier choices, and lower their risk for developing type II diabetes.

Moderate lifestyle changes can reduce a person's risk of developing type II diabetes by

58%



Connecting Prediabetes, Lifestyle, and Better Health

The CDC estimates more than a third of American adults have abnormally high blood glucose levels, or prediabetes. It's a condition that leads to more than just type II diabetes, the leading cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower-limb amputations, and adult-onset blindness in the United States. People with prediabetes are also at risk for other chronic diseases, including stroke and heart disease.

Studies show that a few modest lifestyle changes—reducing stress, losing 5% to 7% body weight, adding 20 minutes of physical activity to every day—can help people delay and even stop the development of type II diabetes. But for many, making lasting lifestyle changes can be difficult. This is especially true for people working toward better health on their own.

The DPP lifestyle-change coaching program for people with prediabetes addresses those difficulties head-on, coupling participants' commitment to a year-long curriculum with ongoing resources and support.

How does National Diabetes Prevention Program Lifestyle Coaching Work?

To achieve lasting behavior changes, participants make a long-term commitment. The year-long program consists of 16 one-hour weekly classes followed by six one-hour monthly classes that reemphasize earlier lessons and help participants stay on track. It's a supportive environment where learners can help each other work through setbacks and celebrate milestones.

Since 2013, the program has trained 130 lifestyle coaches in Wisconsin and has been adopted by 12 health systems, three tribal nations, five community-based organizations, three insurance companies, three major employers, and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

The investment is paying off. According to studies, for every 100 high-risk adults who complete the program:

- **15** new cases of type II diabetes are prevented
- **162** missed work days are avoided
- **11** people eliminate their need for blood pressure or cholesterol medications
- **20** years of health are recovered
- **\$91,400** in health care costs are saved

The first day...people didn't see a way to do this. They were thinking, 'It's going to be too hard.' But by the end, they had embraced it. As a facilitator, that is very moving—to see people embrace life changes. It spoke volumes to me about the value of this program on a person's life."

Laurie LaCoursiere, Lifestyle Coach

In 2009 alone, diabetes cost Wisconsin **\$6 billion in medical care and lost productivity.**

2011 Burden of Diabetes in Wisconsin

What Happens when it's all Connected?

Wisconsin's Chronic Disease Prevention Program and its many partners across the state are working to connect more aspects of public health together to help people live healthier lives. Focus areas include diabetes, heart disease, nutrition, physical activity, and obesity.

The more we connect, the more we achieve. These connections help create healthier environments, improve health equity, increase productivity, reduce health care costs, increase life expectancy, and improve quality of life.

To learn more about how you can connect to better health, visit <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/chronic-disease.htm>

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