Diabetes is a challenging disease that affects the entire family in many ways. If you are living with diabetes or have a loved one with the disease, family support is very important when it comes to managing diabetes and preventing serious health problems. It’s also important to know that if you have a family history of diabetes – such as a mother, father, brother or sister – you are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

You can take steps to prevent type 2 diabetes!

Although you cannot change your family health history, knowing about it can give you the information you need to work with your health-care team to take action on the things you can change. If you are at risk for type 2 diabetes, you can prevent or delay this disease by making important lifestyle changes. If you’re overweight, losing 5-7 percent of your body weight (for example, 10 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds) can help to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Here are some tips to help you do this:

Step 1
Move more

Plan to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity five days each week to help you lose weight. You can get this amount in small ways throughout the day. If you have not been active, talk to your doctor and start slowly to build up to your goal.

Here are some ideas to fit more physical activity into your day:

- Park your car farther away from stores, movie theaters or your office.
- Use TV breaks to stretch, take a quick walk around your home, do some sit-ups or march in place.

Step 2
Make healthy food choices

Choose foods that are low in fat, sugar and calories to help you lose weight. Limit portion sizes.

Start today to:

- Eat a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits
- Choose whole grain foods: whole wheat bread and crackers, oatmeal, brown rice and cereals.
- Lower fat intake: broil or bake poultry, meats and fish instead of frying.
- Lighten your recipes by using nonfat or low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese, sour cream, cream cheese or mayonnaise. Use cooking spray instead of oil.
- Avoid getting too hungry by eating a healthy snack between meals.
- Do not keep chips, cookies or candy in your home. Better choices for snacks might include raw vegetables, fruit, low-fat or nonfat yogurt, or a small handful of nuts, pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds.
- Choose water to drink.

Use this chart as a guide for portion sizes

1 cup cereal flakes or cooked vegetables = baseball
1 teaspoon butter or margarine = thumb tip
1 tablespoon salad dressing = matchbook
2 tablespoons peanut butter or hummus = golf ball
3 ounce meat/chicken/fish = deck of cards

Step 3
Start NOW to prevent diabetes

The key to losing weight and preventing diabetes is to make long-term changes that work for you every day. Taking these steps is a great way to get started.

Want to know whether you are at risk for type 2 diabetes? Take the “Family Health History Quiz” at www.ndep.nih.gov/am-i-at-risk/family-history/#main.
Fresh Apple Bread
Serves 16

- 1½ cups flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 3 apples, cored and chopped
- ¼ cup raisins
- ½ cup egg substitute
- ¼ cup skim milk
- ¼ cup light margarine (such as Brummel and Brown), melted

Instructions: Coat an 8 1/2 x 4 1/2 inch loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, brown sugar and oats. Add apple, raisins, egg substitute, milk and margarine. Mix until dry ingredients are moistened. Bake at 350 degrees for 55 to 60 minutes.

Nutrition facts per serving: 140 calories, 2 g fat, 0 g trans fat, 270 mg sodium, 28 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber.

Easy Baked Apple for One

- 1 medium cooking apple
- 2 teaspoons sugar substitute (or 1 packet)
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Instructions: Wash and dry apple. Core apple and use a peeler to strip away the peel on the top third of the apple (this is easy to do by peeling in a circle, starting from the top). Place the apple in a small microwaveable dish. Sprinkle sweetener and cinnamon over top and into core of apple. Cover the dish tightly with plastic wrap and microwave for about 7 minutes on high or until apple is soft. Remove from microwave, remove wrap, and spoon the collected "syrup" back onto top of apple.

Nutrition facts per serving: 80 calories, 0g fat, 20 mg sodium, 22g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber.