

BEEFING UP AMERICA'S HEALTH: CAN A MEATCENTRIC DIET BE THE ANSWER TO THE PREDIABETES SURGE?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States is experiencing a public health crisis, with nearly 98 million adults (over 1 in 3 Americans) diagnosed with prediabetes.¹ Left unchecked, prediabetes can progress into type 2 diabetes within five years, significantly affecting individuals' health and productivity. In the workplace, diabetes-related costs are substantial, with employers spending billions annually on healthcare, absenteeism, and lost productivity. This white paper explores innovative strategies for combating the prediabetes epidemic, focusing on the potential role of meatcentric, low-carbohydrate diets in preventing and reversing this condition. By adopting a proactive employee wellness programs specifically focused on "metabolic health", employers can significantly reduce healthcare costs, improve productivity, and enhance employee health outcomes.

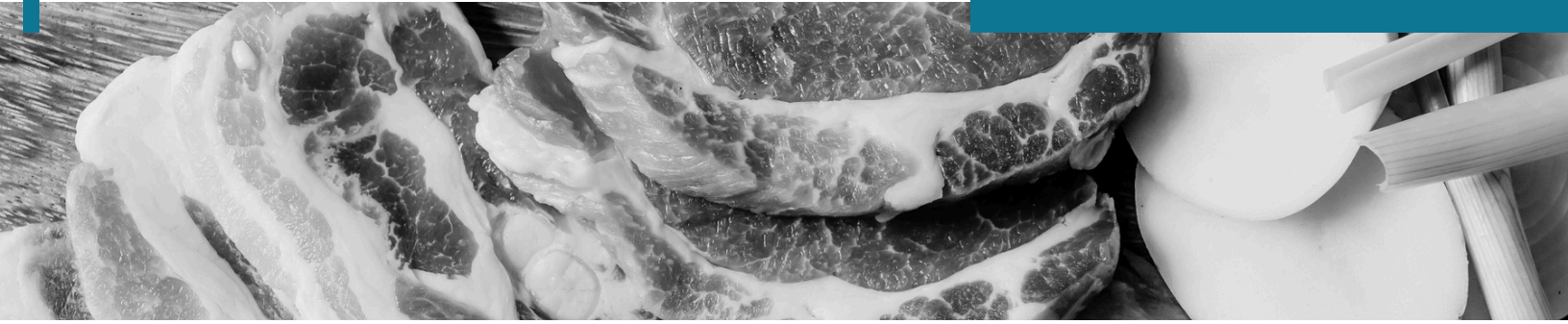
INTRODUCTION: THE PREDIABETES EPIDEMIC

Prediabetes, characterized by elevated blood sugar levels that are not yet high enough for a type 2 diabetes diagnosis, affects over 98 million adults in the U.S. Despite its prevalence, most individuals with prediabetes remain unaware of their condition, as it often presents no symptoms. If left untreated, prediabetes can escalate into type 2 diabetes, leading to a range of severe complications, including heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure. However, prediabetes is reversible with early intervention, particularly through dietary changes and lifestyle modifications.

In recent years, evidence has emerged suggesting that a meatcentric, low-carbohydrate diet may be a powerful tool in reversing both prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. This white paper examines the science behind these diets, the urgency of addressing the prediabetes epidemic, and the role employers can play in creating supportive workplace metabolic wellness programs.

THE LOOMING HEALTH CRISIS: PREDIABETES IN AMERICA

The CDC estimates that approximately 38% of all adults in the U.S. has prediabetes, yet fewer than 10% of those individuals are aware of their condition.¹ By 2025, it is projected that nearly half of Americans will be affected by prediabetes, putting an even greater strain on public health and the workforce.



The societal cost of diabetes is staggering, with diabetes-related healthcare spending exceeding \$413 billion in 2022 alone.[1] Additionally, individuals with diabetes experience a significant loss in productivity, with absenteeism and reduced work performance impacting organizations. Given the scale of the issue, it is imperative that employers take a proactive role in addressing prediabetes through workplace wellness programs that are focused on metabolic health.

DIETARY SOLUTIONS: CAN A MEATCENTRIC DIET REVERSE PREDIABETES?

In recent years, the concept of a meatcentric, low-carbohydrate diet has gained attention as a potential solution to reversing prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. A growing body of research suggests that restricting carbohydrates, particularly processed carbs and sugars, can improve insulin sensitivity and lower blood sugar levels.[5]

01

The Science of Low-Carb and Meatcentric Diets

A ketogenic or very low-carbohydrate diet (VLCD) involves reducing carbohydrate intake to less than 50 grams per day, which forces the body to burn fat for fuel instead of glucose. Research has shown that low-carb diets can significantly lower glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c) levels, a key indicator of long-term blood sugar control, in individuals with prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. Studies have also demonstrated the safety and efficacy of low-carb diets for managing blood sugar levels, with some evidence suggesting that these diets can lead to remission of diabetes, at least in the short term.^{4,5}

A meatcentric diet, which prioritizes animal protein and fats while minimizing carbohydrates, aligns with these principles. Meat is a high-quality source of protein and fat, essential for building muscle and maintaining satiety, without the blood sugar spikes associated with carbohydrate-heavy meals.



Contrary to popular belief, a plant-based diet high in fruits and whole grains may not be ideal for people with prediabetes. Plant-based diets are naturally high in carbohydrates, which can lead to rapid blood sugar spikes. If not carefully managed, plant-based diets can potentially worsen insulin resistance and increase the risk of developing full-blown diabetes. This is especially true if the diet includes a large amount of refined grains and sugary fruits without enough protein and fat to balance it out.

02

Effectiveness and Long-Term Considerations

Research has indicated that low-carb diets can lead to significant improvements in blood sugar management, weight loss, and insulin sensitivity.[3] However, the long-term sustainability of such diets remains a challenge. Studies show that while individuals may experience short-term benefits (up to two years), maintaining these benefits in the long run requires careful planning, patient education, and consistent behavioral changes.[3]

The effectiveness of a meatcentric diet for prediabetes is still being evaluated, with some recent research suggesting that it may offer a sustainable and healthy choice for many individuals. Long-term adherence remains a critical factor in achieving and maintaining diabetes reversal or prevention.[7]



THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS IN MANAGING PREDIABETES

Employers play a critical role in addressing the rising rates of prediabetes, particularly in the workplace, where health-related issues such as diabetes can severely impact productivity. A well-structured workplace metabolic wellness program that includes health screenings, education, and dietary interventions can significantly reduce the impact of prediabetes on the workforce.

01

Health Screenings and Early Detection

Offering employees access to biometric screenings—including blood sugar levels, blood pressure, waist circumference, fasting insulin level, Hemoglobin A1c and certain lipid levels—can help identify individuals at risk for prediabetes. Early intervention is key to preventing the progression to type 2 diabetes. Programs that integrate these screenings, along with follow-up actions and access to medical advice, can empower employees to take control of their health.

02

Education and Awareness

Employers can provide educational campaigns to raise awareness about prediabetes, its risk factors, and the role of diet in prevention. Through metabolic-focused wellness coaching and employee support programs, businesses can offer information about the benefits of low-carb and meatcentric diets, helping employees make informed decisions about their nutrition.



03

Supportive Policies and Accommodations

Workplaces can create an environment that supports healthy eating and active lifestyles by offering healthy food options, creating opportunities for physical activity, and providing flexibility in scheduling to allow for proper meal planning and exercise. Flexible accommodations, such as private spaces for blood sugar testing and meal breaks, can also help employees with prediabetes manage their condition effectively.

04

Comprehensive Diabetes Management Programs

By investing in comprehensive diabetes management programs and specifically a comprehensive workplace metabolic wellness program, employers can provide employees with tools to manage their condition effectively. Studies show that employees who receive assistance with diabetes management experience improved productivity, reduced absenteeism, and better overall health outcomes.[6] These programs can include personalized coaching, nutritional counseling, access to continuous glucose monitoring devices and access to resources for managing both prediabetes and type 2 diabetes.



CONCLUSION: A HEALTHIER FUTURE THROUGH PROACTIVE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

With nearly half of Americans projected to have prediabetes by 2025, the need for effective prevention and management strategies is urgent.^[1] A meatcentric, low-carbohydrate diet presents a promising approach to reversing or managing prediabetes with the long-term success of such diets depending upon proper education, support, and behavioral change.

Employers have a unique opportunity to take the lead in mitigating the impact of prediabetes through comprehensive wellness programs that include health screenings, educational initiatives, and dietary interventions. By investing in these programs, businesses can not only improve the health of their workforce but also reduce healthcare costs, enhance employee productivity, and foster a culture of health and well-being.

A proactive approach to managing prediabetes is not just a moral imperative—it's also a financial necessity. Employers who prioritize employee wellness today will contribute to a healthier, more productive workforce tomorrow. The time to act is now, before the prediabetes epidemic becomes a full-blown healthcare crisis.



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Jen Cleveland is a Registered Dietitian with more than 30 years of experience working with clients with diabetes, obesity, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and a host of many other diseases related to poor metabolic health.

She has a BS in Nutrition as well as a Master's Degree in Medical Science from Indiana University School of Medicine. She is truly passionate about "letting food be thy medicine", and believes in going "against the grain" with a low carb approach that will keep you satisfied, reduce cravings and improve your metabolic health.



Dr. Philip Ovadia

Board-certified Cardiac Surgeon and founder of Ovadia Heart Health

Our mission is to optimize the public's metabolic health and help people like you stay off my operating table. As a heart surgeon who used to be morbidly obese, I have seen firsthand the failures of mainstream diets and medicine. I realized that what helped me lose over 100 pounds was the same solution that could have prevented thousands of open heart surgeries I've performed — metabolic health. Through Ovadia Heart Health, I teach individuals and organizations my complete metabolic health system to prevent and reverse disease, avoid early death, and live well for life.



Next Steps: Your heart's health is too important to leave in the hands of someone who doesn't fully support your wellness journey.

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