

Small Changes, Big Results

Taking slow, steady steps can help you get your diabetes under control

Nancy Carter, 54, of Italy, Texas, took diabetes education classes at Baylor Medical Center at Waxahachie a few years ago. But she found that over time she started to backtrack, giving up the good habits she had developed. Recently, she committed to improving her health and re-enrolled in the program. By making slow, steady changes, she has dropped 25 pounds, weighing less than she has in 15 years, and gained better control over her blood sugar levels. Here's how she did it.

TRACK WHAT YOU EAT. "I track every morsel,"

Carter says. Logging your food intake can help you identify places you can cut back or ways you can tweak your intake.

HAVE A PLAN B. At family gatherings, Carter may choose smaller portions of what's offered, or she may bring along something else to eat if she anticipates a lot of unhealthy options.

DRINK PLENTY OF WATER. Carter had fallen out of the habit of drinking water, and restarted when she recognized how important it was to her health. She gave up drinking soda of any kind.



EXERCISE. Carter started with just five minutes a day, and now walks 30 to 60 minutes at up to 3.7 mph six or seven days a week. She also tones with hand weights. "I see myself as stronger and more motivated, and I think other people do, too," she says.

MONITOR YOUR BLOOD SUGAR. "I would go seven days without checking my blood sugar because I knew it was out of kilter," Carter says. "I keep a good check on it now—I check it at least twice a day."

GO EASY ON YOURSELF. Change your lifestyle one day at a time. "I used to be an all-or-nothing person, but I had to rethink. I don't have to be that anymore," Carter says. "Even if you exercise 50 percent of the time and eat right 50 percent of the time you're going to improve your health."

Christie Windsor, a diabetes educator at Baylor Waxahachie, applauds Carter's efforts and points out that small changes are key to success. "If you're not exercising, aim for three days a week at first, for example. By setting short-term goals that are attainable, you can reward yourself at the end of a week with a new book, a massage or a trip to the movies—something that helps you feel successful." ● *By Stephanie Thurrott*



  **Get with the Program**

For information on the diabetes education program at Baylor Waxahachie, call **1-800-4BAYLOR** or visit **BaylorHealth.com/Waxahachie**.

