



NJ EMPOWER TO PREVENT PROGRAM

FAQ

Q. How is the program structured?

A. NJ Empower to Prevent (NJEP) is an entirely virtual program, with **26 diabetes prevention education classes** offered via **Zoom** over the course of **one year**. It is provided from the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program "Prevent T2" curriculum. We operate on a cohort model, meaning you will be in a group with 12-15 other participants. Each cohort will be assigned two Lifestyle Coaches to teach classes and provide assistance with your health goals throughout the year.

Class Structure:

- **Weekly** sessions for sixteen weeks
- **Bimonthly** sessions for two months
- **Monthly** sessions for six months
- All classes are **1 hour** in length

Optional Opportunities:

- **Office Hours:** Periodic optional sessions; offered for participants to learn more about health and wellness topics not covered in the regular curriculum.
- **One-on-One Coaching Appointments:** You may request to meet with one of your Lifestyle Coaches individually at any point in the program for extra help with challenges or specific questions.
- **Make-up Sessions:** Are available by request for any missed session.

All classes and meetings are done via the Zoom platform. We are unable to offer in-person technological or coaching assistance, so we encourage all participants to be confident in the virtual aspects of our program prior to its start. Please reach out to program staff if you have any concerns about the requirements.

Q. What is covered in the program?

A. NJEP utilizes the CDC's "Prevent T2" National Diabetes Prevention Program curriculum. This curriculum was designed with scientific studies in mind to create long-term lifestyle change habits, promote modest weight loss, increased physical

activity, and reduced HbA1C throughout the course of the program. During the year-long program, you will learn how to:

- Create, achieve, and maintain goals related to type 2 diabetes prevention
- Make moderate changes to diet and physical activity for modest, lasting weight loss
- Form strategies for self-monitoring eating/activity habits
- Build self-efficacy, increase social support, and become a more efficient problem-solver to implement lasting changes

Q. How much does it cost to participate?

A. Participation in NJ Empower to Prevent is at no cost. We are currently funded in part by the New Jersey Department of Health, which covers the usual participant cost for this National Diabetes Prevention Program.

The cost of class materials is also covered. Program leaders will send you all hard and electronic copies of resources you will need for our program **after** you complete a Program Information & Consent Session, confirm your eligibility, and complete all registration materials.

Q. What do I need in order to participate in the NJEP program?

A. Because our program utilizes Zoom for sessions, and email as a main communication method, participants must have a computer, laptop, tablet, or phone that is able to support this software. You should have access to WiFi, or unlimited data during each session, and be able to participate in a quiet, private location.

Q. I understand I have to be eligible based on the CDC's prediabetes standards to participate in this program. How will my status be confirmed by program leaders?

A. To be eligible for our program, you must meet the following CDC requirements and be:

- a. 18 or older
- b. Not currently pregnant
- c. BMI greater than or equal to 25 (23 if Asian American)

If you meet all three of the criteria above, you will also need to confirm your prediabetes status with a **recent blood test** (taken within 12 months of the start of the program.) showing an HbA1C value between **5.7-6.4** or an elevated fasting blood glucose between **100-125 mg/dl.**

If you cannot get a blood test by the time we start our program, you may also qualify via the **CDC Risk Test with a score of 5 or higher.** That test can be accessed at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/prediabetes/takethetest/>

Prior to the program's start, we ask eligible participants to simply share that they are eligible with program leaders. Once we are near your cohort's start date, you will be required to attend a Program Information and Consent Session, where you will learn more about the type of information we request and why. After you understand the nature of our information collection, you will be asked to sign a consent form if you would still like to proceed with the program. Upon its completion, you will be sent a form to confirm your eligibility status. This form will ask you for basic demographic factors (age, ethnicity/race, gender, etc), family history, current health habits, and ask for either your blood test and/or risk test report. Program leaders will use this form to verify your eligibility. After we confirm you meet CDC standards, we will send you your program materials, and Zoom link to the first class.

Q. Is the same Zoom link used for each class? How do I gain access to the sessions?

A. Every NJ Empower to Prevent session (class, office hours, and one-on-one) will use its own individual Zoom link. This is to ensure that all participants remain up-to-date with the CDC-required electronic surveys that are sent out with each class. Participants who do not complete their required submissions in a timely way are considered "ineligible" for program classes, incentives, and extra offerings until they are caught up. **Please be mindful of communication from program leaders to avoid missing a class link.**

Q. What is expected of me before/during /after class sessions?

- **A.** We are required by the CDC to report participant's weight on each class day, as well as their physical activity minutes from the week prior. This means you will be required to keep track of your exercise minutes throughout the week and remember to take your weight each class day. You are highly encouraged to report this information on the day of class using the electronic survey sent out with the class link. If you are unable to report your weight/physical activity

minutes on class day, you are expected to do so within 3 days of your class to ensure you receive your next class link on time.

- During the class, please remember we are a virtual group learning environment. We ask participants to stay muted when someone else is speaking to prevent feedback and extra background noise, but you are always welcome to come off mute with any contributions, questions, or other comments. If you are uncomfortable speaking up in a group environment, you can contribute via the chat feature. However, we do encourage full participation to promote a sense of trust and community between our group members. We also ask participants to please come to class and other sessions on time and with their cameras on, unless they are unable to do so.
- After each class session, please be on the lookout for program communications coming from **Mikaela Kane** (mtk104@njaes.rutgers.edu). We do our best to be respectful of the inboxes of our participants. This means all emails you receive from our program will be important, and related specifically to classes, data collection, or scheduling for make-ups/one-one-ones. **Please make sure you are reading and responding to these communications as appropriate.** If email is not your primary form of communication, please reach out to Mikaela to arrange a different method to receive pertinent program information.

Q. What happens if I miss a class? Are NJ Empower to Prevent sessions recorded?

A. Some of our sessions will cover material that can bring up personal and/or sensitive material for participants during discussions. To respect their privacy, and uphold our own confidentiality protocols, **we are unable to record and distribute any of our sessions.** We encourage you to attend as many as possible to avoid missing key information. However, we know conflicts with our program times will undoubtedly arise over the course of a year. If you miss a session, coaches are available to arrange a make-up session with you. Make-ups may range from 30-45 minutes depending on the topic and may become a group makeup depending on how many other participants missed the original session. Please email your lifestyle coaches directly to schedule a make-up session.

Q. I would like to be part of the program, but I do not finish work until the start time of my group. Can I join the meeting from my phone as I drive home?

A. NJEP encourages full participation from everyone in each of our groups to foster a sense of support and community throughout the program. However, we understand that

work schedules may occasionally conflict with the start time of the program. We encourage you to come late, rather than not at all. If you will be in the car driving, please let your coaches know in advance that you will be in “listen only” mode until you are safely home.

Q. I joined the program, but am no longer able to commit to the remainder of the sessions. Am I able to rejoin in the future?

A. We do everything in our power to maintain a 100% retention rate for each of our NJEP cohorts. However, we understand that life can change abruptly and significantly within a year, and work, family, or other commitments may prevent you from finishing out the program. If you must drop out due to scheduling reasons, please contact us for your alternatives. We are more than happy to include you in a future group if space is available.

If you are considering dropping out at any point in the program, please be aware that we currently only have capacity for one spring and one fall cohort each year, and our wait list can be up to a year long. Our coaches and coordinators are happy to work with you on what you may need to get more out of the program, so please reach out to us with your needs before making any decisions on your status.

Q. What are some limitations of the group?

A. NJEP is limited to topics and content that are CDC-approved. We must adhere to the required curriculum during class sessions. We will do our best to answer any questions in as much detail as we are able to provide, but more in-depth coverage of topics can only be done in our Office Hour sessions. We are also unable to offer coaching on issues unrelated to the scope of diabetes prevention. If you need specific, personalized advice related to diet, physical activity, or medical concerns during the program, we will try to help direct you to an appropriate professional suited for those concerns. Please keep in mind that many of our coaches are registered dietitians and certified fitness professionals. Even though they have these qualifications, it is outside the scope of this program for them to create any specific diet or exercise plans the way they would if you were a client of their individual services. These professionals are great resources for your questions and can provide a wealth of general information, but we are required to refer specific individual health advice to outside sources.

We also work primarily within a group format. While one-on-one sessions are offered, and we encourage all participants to take advantage of them, the schedule of your coaches will determine how often they can provide these opportunities. NJEP requires

coaches to hold One-on-One's for participants generally at the 8, 12, and/or 16 week marks. Appointments outside of these weeks are available upon request of either participant and/or coach. You do not have to wait for a coach's request to meet if you feel you have questions or need some extra assistance.

Q. I still have some questions about the program that are not answered here. Who can I contact for more information?

A. Prior to your cohort's start, you may contact the following program staff for answers to any questions:

Shailja Mathur, M.S. M.Ed, RDN

Assistant Professor/Family and Community Health Sciences Educator

Email: mathur@njaes.rutgers.edu

Phone: 908-526-6295

Mikaela Kane, PT

Family and Community Health Sciences Program Coordinator

Email: mtk104@njaes.rutgers.edu

Phone: 908-526-6295, Ext: 2534

Once your cohort begins, you will be able to contact your Lifestyle Coaches if you have any questions related to program material or classes. Any concerns regarding scheduling, program requirements, attendance, or other administrative areas can still be directed to Mikaela Kane.