

# Diabetes Awareness

## Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!

### What is diabetes?

Diabetes is defined as a disease characterized by high blood glucose levels that result from the body's inability to produce and/or use insulin. Because the associated symptoms seem harmless, diabetes often goes undiagnosed and, therefore, untreated. The statistics of this disease are alarming; almost 26 million Americans have diabetes, another 79 million have pre-diabetes and 7 million more are undiagnosed. It is estimated that by the year 2050, 1 in 3 American adults will have diabetes unless serious steps are taken to stop or prevent it. <sup>(1)</sup>

### What are the types of diabetes?

There are three types of diabetes:

- **Type 1:** Known as juvenile diabetes, it is usually diagnosed in young adults and children and accounts for about 5% of all diabetics. Insulin therapy is needed because the body does not produce insulin. <sup>(1)</sup>
- **Type 2:** Known as adult onset diabetes, it is the most common form of the disease. More than 90% of all diabetics have Type 2. Type 2 diabetics can produce insulin but either the pancreas is not producing enough insulin or the body cannot use the insulin adequately. <sup>(1)</sup>
- **Gestational:** This type of diabetes occurs in pregnant women who did not have diabetes prior to their pregnancy. It develops in women who experience high blood glucose levels later in their pregnancy. <sup>(1)</sup>

### What are the symptoms of diabetes?

Diabetes often goes undiagnosed because many of the symptoms seem harmless or go unnoticed. Learning the symptoms of diabetes is important as early detection can decrease the chance of developing more serious complications from this disease. <sup>(1)</sup>

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|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b><u>Type 1 Diabetes</u></b>                | <b><u>Type 2 Diabetes</u></b>        |
| ▪ Frequent urination                         | ▪ Any of the Type 1 symptoms         |
| ▪ Unusual thirst                             | ▪ Frequent infections                |
| ▪ Extreme hunger                             | ▪ Blurred vision                     |
| ▪ Unusual weight loss                        | ▪ Cuts/bruises that are slow to heal |
| ▪ Extreme fatigue and irritability           | ▪ Tingling/numbness in hands/feet    |
| ▪ Recurring skin, gum, or bladder infections |                                      |

### Who is at greatest risk for Type 2 diabetes?

Certain individuals are at a greater risk than others for developing Type 2 diabetes. Those individuals are: <sup>(1)</sup>

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|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ People who are overweight                | ▪ People with a low HDL cholesterol level                                       |
| ▪ People over age 45                       | ▪ People with a high triglycerides level                                        |
| ▪ People with a family history of diabetes | ▪ People with high blood pressure                                               |
| ▪ People with impaired glucose tolerance   | ▪ People of certain racial/ethnic groups                                        |
| ▪ People who do not exercise regularly     | ▪ Women who had gestational diabetes or had a baby weighing 9 + pounds at birth |

### What are the health risk factors for those with diabetes?

Unfortunately, diabetes increases your risk for other serious health issues. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure and of new cases of blindness among adults. Even more alarming, two out of three people with diabetes will die from heart disease or stroke. The good news, however, is that many individuals with diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of the complications of this disease with proper treatment and recommended lifestyle changes. Some of the more serious health risks are: <sup>(1)</sup>

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|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ Eye issues like glaucoma and cataracts               | ▪ High blood pressure which increases risk for heart attack, stroke, eye issues & kidney disease |
| ▪ Foot problems like poor blood flow & numbness        | ▪ Mental health issues like anger/denial/depression                                              |
| ▪ Skin complications like fungal infections or itching | ▪ Hearing loss                                                                                   |
| ▪ Heart related issues like heart disease and stroke   |                                                                                                  |

### When to contact your doctor?

While diabetes is a common disease, it is important that families learn about the medical therapies and lifestyle choices important in the treatment of this disease. If you have any symptoms of diabetes, contact your doctor immediately to ensure that you have no serious health problem. <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

This information is intended as informational only; not as a replacement for the medical advice of your physician.