



Resident Reporter

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The not-so-sweet tale of diabetes

Diabetes is a disease that changes the way your body uses food. In your body, the food you eat turns to sugar. Your blood then takes this sugar all over the body. Insulin helps get sugar from the blood into the body for energy. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life. With diabetes, your body does not get the fuel it needs, and your blood sugar stays high. High blood sugar can cause heart and kidney problems, blindness, stroke, the loss of a foot or leg, or even death. The cause of diabetes continues to be a mystery, although both genetics and environmental factors such as obesity and lack of exercise appear to play roles.

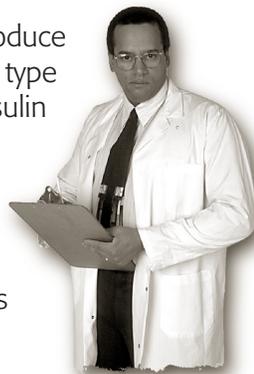
The Good News ... You Can Manage Diabetes

Watch what you eat and get exercise, use medicines wisely and check your blood sugar.

Types of Diabetes

Type 1: The body does not produce any insulin. People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin every day to stay alive.

Type 2: The body does not make enough, or use insulin well. Most people with diabetes have type 2.



Gestational Diabetes: Some women get diabetes when they are pregnant.

Watch What You Eat and Get Exercise

There is no one diet for people with diabetes. Work with your doctor and health team to come up with a plan that's right for you.

You can eat the foods you love by watching serving sizes. Carbohydrates raise your blood sugar the most. The *Nutrition Facts label* on foods can help. Many packaged foods contain more than 1 serving.

The foods we eat are made up of:

- Carbohydrates (*fruits, vegetables, breads, juices, milk, cereals and desserts*)
- Fats
- Protein
- Cholesterol
- Fiber (*fruits, vegetables, beans, breads, and cereals*)



Be active at least 30 minutes a day most days of the week.

Exercise helps your body's insulin work better. It also lowers your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol.

Practical Information
for Residents of Manufactured
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Use Medicines Wisely

Sometimes people with diabetes need to take pills or take a shot (insulin). Be sure to follow all directions. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist what your medicines do, when to take them, and if they have any side effects.

Check Your Blood Sugar and Know Your ABCs

- Help prevent heart disease and stroke by controlling your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.
- Make a plan with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
- Check your blood sugar using a meter (home testing kit). This tells you what your blood sugar level is so that you can make wise choices.
- Ask your doctor for an A-1-C (*A-one-see*) blood test. It measures blood sugar levels over 2-3 months.
- Talk to your health team about your ABC's:
 - A - 1 - C
 - Blood pressure
 - Cholesterol

Women and Diabetes

- In the U.S., 9.1 million women have diabetes and 3 million of them don't even know it.
- Women who have diabetes are more likely to have a miscarriage or a baby with birth defects.
- Women with diabetes are more likely to be poor which makes it harder to manage the disease.

Heart Disease and Stroke

- People with diabetes are more likely to have a heart attack and have it at a younger age.
- Most people with diabetes die from heart attack or stroke.

Are You at Risk for Diabetes?

- Are you overweight?
- Do you get little or no exercise?

- Do you have high blood pressure (130/80 or higher)?
- Do you have a brother or sister with diabetes?
- Do you have a parent with diabetes?
- Are you a woman who had diabetes when you were pregnant *OR* have you had a baby who weighed more than 9 pounds at birth?
- Are you African American, Native American, Hispanic, or Asian American/Pacific Islander?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you need a diabetes test.

Warning Signs

- Going to the bathroom frequently
- Feeling hungry or thirsty all the time
- Blurred vision
- Lose weight without trying
- Cuts/bruises that are slow to heal
- Feeling tired most of the time
- Tingling/numbness in the hands or feet

It's important to note that most people with diabetes do not notice any signs.

Thank you to the FirstGov's Federal Citizen Information Center, the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS), and the American Diabetes Association (ADA) for the information on Diabetes.

For more information, go to <http://www.diabetes.org>, <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov> or see your family physician.