



Live Healthy and Be Active with TakeCare

Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which the glucose (sugar) level in your blood becomes too high.

The food you eat is broken down into glucose which is the basic fuel for cells. Glucose needs the help of a hormone called insulin, which is made in the pancreas, and takes the glucose from the blood into the cells. If your body does not make insulin (or enough insulin) glucose builds up in the blood and diabetes results.

Anyone can develop diabetes. It can affect people of all ages and backgrounds. Some common risk factors include:

- Family history of diabetes
- Lack of physical activity
- Being overweight
- Being over age 45
- Being African American, Native American, Latino, Asian-American, Asian, Indian or Pacific Islander
- History of gestational diabetes

Prediabetes is a “pre-diagnosis” of diabetes—you can think of it as a warning sign. It’s when your blood glucose level (blood sugar level) is higher than normal, but it’s not high enough to be considered diabetes.

The three main types of diabetes are:

- Type 1 – your pancreas does not produce insulin
- Type 2 – either your pancreas does not produce enough insulin or your body’s cells do not respond to it.
- Gestational diabetes – can develop if the pancreas does not make enough insulin during pregnancy

What are the signs and symptoms of diabetes?

Some people with diabetes don’t have any signs or symptoms but common symptoms include:

- being very thirsty
- urinating often
- feeling very hungry
- feeling very tired
- losing weight without trying
- sores that heal slowly
- feelings of pins and needles in your feet
- blurry eyesight

The only way to know if you have diabetes is to have your doctor do a blood test.



How is diabetes diagnosed?

Your doctor may recommend the following blood tests to confirm a diagnosis of diabetes:

- A1C of 6.5% or higher
- Fasting Plasma Glucose (FPG) of 126mg/dl or higher
- Oral Glucose Tolerance Test of 200mg/dl or higher

What are the complications of diabetes?

Without treatment, diabetes can result in serious health problems, including blindness, lower-limb amputation, heart disease, kidney failure, and stroke.

You can learn to manage diabetes and its complications by following the ABC method.

- A – Check A1C twice a year (Goal: 7% or lower)
- B – Check blood pressure regularly (Goal: 140/90 or lower)
- C – Check cholesterol every year (Goal: LDL = 100 or lower)
- D – Dental check-up twice a year
- E – Eye exam once a year
- F – Foot check-up by your doctor on each visit

Would you like to learn more?

Call our TakeCare Wellness Team at 300-7161/7224 to learn how TakeCare members are eligible to receive free Diabetes management and education services through the TakeCare Wellness Program.

The TakeCare Wellness Team has made this pamphlet available to help you understand information about your health. This pamphlet includes general wellness and health information and is not meant to replace the advice of your doctor or healthcare provider. If you are under medical care and have concerns, always follow your doctor's recommendations.

For more information about your health, ask your health care provider.

References

- Diabetes Basics. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/?loc=db-slabnav>
- Living well with diabetes: A self-care workbook (7th ed.). (2015). (n.p.): Staywell, LLC