



Could You Have

Diabetes?

What is diabetes and who gets it?

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your body does not make or use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone that helps your blood sugar get to cells for energy. If left untreated, diabetes can cause serious health problems such as heart disease, kidney disease, blindness, loss of limbs, and diseases of the nervous system. People with diabetes are twice as likely to have a heart attack or stroke.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 24 million people in the United States have diabetes, but 25% of them don't even know they have it.

Both children and adults of all ages and races can have diabetes.

Risk Factors

You are at greater risk for diabetes if you are:

- age 40 or older
- overweight
- related to someone who has diabetes
- African American, Latino, Native American, Asian American or Pacific Islander

How can I tell if I might have diabetes?

Diabetes can affect different functions of the body. There are many symptoms. Here are some common warning signs:

- constant thirst
- frequent urination
- constant hunger
- fatigue
- weight loss
- blurred vision

If you think you might have diabetes, don't wait to take action. Call your doctor and schedule a check-up that includes a simple test for diabetes. By detecting diabetes in its early stages and getting proper treatment you can lower your risk of complications.

How can I control diabetes?

There is no cure for diabetes. However, you can control it by working closely with your health care team, which may include your doctor, your eye doctor, a diabetes educator and a nutritionist. Together, you and your doctor can make a treatment plan to control your blood sugar levels. By

following a proper plan of diet, exercise, and medication, you can control diabetes and prevent serious health problems in the future. If you control diabetes, you can lead a full, active life. Studies show that maintaining lower blood sugar levels helps even those who have had poor control in the past.



Can diabetes be prevented?

The Diabetes Prevention Program, a study sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, found that people with pre-diabetes (higher than normal blood sugar levels) can prevent or delay the onset of the disease by a 5 to 7 percent weight loss. That's only 10 to 15 pounds for a 200-pound person. And it's easier than you think. You just need to build up to 30 minutes of physical activity a day, five days a week and eat a reduced fat and lower calorie diet.

It's worth the effort to prevent diabetes. You will be able to lead a healthier, longer life and enjoy much more time with your friends and family.

Resources

Visit our online diabetes center at
www.carefirst.com/diabetes.

American Diabetes Association

800-DIABETES

www.diabetes.org

en Espanol

www.diabetes.org/espanol

**National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive
and Kidney Diseases**

www.niddk.nih.gov

Joslin Diabetes Center

888-JOSLIN-8

www.joslin.org

**American Association of
Diabetes Educators**

800-338-3633

www.aadenet.org