

Diabetes

Over 9 million women in the U.S. have diabetes, and 3 million of them don't even know it!

Did you know ...?

- Women with diabetes are more likely to have a heart attack and have it at a younger age.
- Some women get diabetes when they are pregnant.
- Women who have diabetes are more likely to have a miscarriage or a baby with birth defects.
- Women with diabetes, according to recent studies are more likely to be poor, which makes it harder to manage the disease.
- Most people with diabetes die from heart attack or stroke.

What is diabetes?

It is a disease that changes the way your body uses food. The food you eat turns to sugar. The sugar then travels through the blood to all parts of the body. Normally, insulin helps get sugar from the blood to the body's cells, where it is used for energy.

When you have diabetes, your body has trouble making and/or using insulin. So your body does not get the fuel it needs. And your blood sugar stays too high.

What are the types of diabetes?

Type 1 --The body does not make any insulin. People with Type1 must take insulin every day to stay alive.

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

Are you at risk for diabetes?

- Do you need to lose weight?
- 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 it 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 answered yes to any of these questions, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist if you need a diabetes test.

What are the warning signs?

- Going to the bathroom a lot
- Feeling hungry or thirsty all the time
- Blurred vision
- Losing weight without trying
- Cuts or bruises that are slow to heal
- Feeling tired all the time
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet

Most people with diabetes do not notice any signs

What Can I Do If I Have Diabetes?

Watch What You Eat and Get Exercise

- There is no one diet for people with diabetes. Work with your health care team to come up with a plan for you.
- You can eat the foods you love by watching serving sizes. The "Nutrition Facts" label on foods can help. Many packaged foods contain more than 1 serving.
- Carbohydrates raise your blood sugar the most. Cut back on these. For example bread, cereal, rice, and pasta.
- 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.

Use Medicines Wisely

- Sometimes people with diabetes need to take pills or insulin shots. Be sure to follow the directions.
- Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist what your medicines do. Also ask 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 keeping your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol under control.
- Check your blood sugar using a meter (home testing kit). This tells what your blood sugar is so 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 to 3 months.

Talk to your health care team about your ABC's:

- **A-1-C**
- **Blood pressure**
- **Cholesterol**

To learn more:

Contact the American Diabetes Association
1-800-342-2383 (1-800-Diabetes)

Rural/Frontier Women's Health Information Line:
1-866-404-6865
www.rfwhcc.org

Information produced by: FDA's Office of Women's Health
www.fda.gov/womens/