

Healthy Words of Wisdom

What is diabetes and why should you be concerned?



What You Should Know About Diabetes

According to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes causes more deaths each year than AIDS and breast cancer combined. What's even more concerning is that diabetes affects 29 million people in the U.S. and 28% of them don't even know they have it. But what is diabetes exactly? It's more than a "blood sugar" disease or a condition that only affects the overweight.

Diabetes occurs when the body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use insulin properly. Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, is necessary to "unlock" the cells so glucose can enter and be used for energy. When glucose can't get into the cells, the glucose in your blood rises, which can cause damage to the kidneys, heart, nerves and eyes. Untreated, diabetes can create irreversible and often fatal complications.

Diabetes Risk Factors

- Being overweight
- Family history, age, race and gender
- Poor eating habits
- History of gestational diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Elevated cholesterol
- Little or no exercise
- Tobacco use

Symptoms of Diabetes

Many times people with diabetes have no symptoms at all or may only have vague symptoms that are easily dismissed. Check with your doctor if you're experiencing any of the following:

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Increased hunger
- Loss of weight without dieting

- Feeling very tired
- Irritability
- Blurred vision

Your health care provider can diagnose diabetes or pre-diabetes using a simple blood test called fasting plasma glucose (FPG) and/or a Hemoglobin A1c test.

Types of Diabetes

Type 1: Condition where the body makes very little or no insulin. People with Type 1 must have insulin to survive.

Type 2: The body makes some insulin but not enough, or the condition where insulin isn't used properly. Type 2 diabetes can sometimes be managed with nutrition and physical activity, but most people will eventually need medication and/or insulin to control their blood sugar.

Gestational Diabetes: Condition where blood sugar increases during pregnancy and usually returns to normal after pregnancy. Having gestational diabetes may increase your risk for developing Type 2 diabetes.

Pre-Diabetes: Pre-diabetes occurs before diabetes when the blood sugar is higher than normal.

Managing Diabetes

If you have diabetes or pre-diabetes, or want to reduce your risk for the condition, there are simple lifestyle changes that may help you control your blood sugar and protect you from further complications.

Physical Activity:

Regular physical activity helps your body use insulin and also helps with weight loss, which can improve your blood sugar. Walking is an easy way to add regular physical activity to your routine. Just start small and work your way up to walking 30 minutes most days of the week. Always discuss activity levels with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Weight Management:

Getting to, and maintaining, a healthy weight through proper nutrition and exercise can improve your overall health and help control your blood sugar. Read on to learn more about how to get started on healthy meal planning.

Smoking Cessation:

Smoking increases the risk for diabetes complications. If you smoke, it's never too late to quit. Also, talk to your doctor about other resources and medications that can help you stay smoke-free.

More Sleep:

Sleep is important for your overall health and well-being. Getting enough sleep (at least seven hours each night) can decrease the risk for developing diabetes and other chronic diseases.

Monitoring and Medications:

If you have diabetes, lifestyle changes may not be enough to treat your condition. Depending on your situation, your physician may have you monitor your blood sugar regularly and/or take medications. Be sure to take your medications as instructed by your doctor to prevent or delay complications.

Medical ID Alert Bracelets:

Finally, if you have diabetes, consider wearing a special bracelet or necklace to help others identify your condition in an emergency.



The Nutrition Factor

Healthy eating is an important tool in managing diabetes. Contrary to popular belief, having diabetes doesn't mean you need to eat special foods or follow complicated recipes and menus. There are many ways you can jump start your way to healthy eating and we've included a few ideas for you here.

Sample Menu

You'll be surprised how easy it is to get started. Try this sample 1,800-calorie daily menu.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
BREAKFAST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 (4½-inch) waffles • 4 Tbsp light syrup • 2 tsp margarine • 1 cup low-fat yogurt • ¾ cup blackberries • Coffee or tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 slices wheat toast • 4 tsp sugar-free jelly • 2 tsp margarine • 1 cup low-fat yogurt • ½ cup orange juice • Coffee or tea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup wheat cereal • 1 cup skim milk • ½ cup apple juice
LUNCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup chili with beans • 12 crackers • ½ cup broccoli • ½ cup cauliflower • 2 Tbsp dip • 1 apple • Diet soda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 cups mix salad greens • 4 oz. grilled chicken • 2 oz. low-fat cheese • 1 Tbsp dressing • ½ cup croutons • 2 dinner rolls • 1 tsp margarine • 1 peach • 1 cup skim milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 slices whole wheat bread • 3 oz. turkey • 4 tsp mayo • 2 lettuce leaves • 3 tomato slices • 1 apple • 6 gingersnaps • 1 cup carrot sticks • 2 Tbsp dip • 10 peanuts • Diet soda
DINNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 oz. hamburger • 1 hamburger bun • 2 lettuce leaves • 2 tomato slices • 1 Tbsp ketchup • 1¼ cup watermelon • 1 oz. chips • 1 cup celery sticks • 2 tsp peanut butter • 1 cup skim milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¾ cup pasta noodles • ¼ cup zucchini • ¼ cup eggplant • ½ cup pasta sauce • 1 breadstick • ½ cup unsweetened applesauce • Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 oz. sirloin steak • 1 small baked potato • 1 tsp margarine • 2 Tbsp sour cream • 1 cup green beans • 2 dinner rolls • 2 tsp margarine • ½ cup unsweetened applesauce • 1 cup skim milk

Plate Method

If you're a visual person, the "plate method" is an easy way to plan healthy meals. This technique teaches proper portion control, and allows you to enjoy your favorite foods in moderation. Here's how it works:

- Fill the largest section, or ½ of the plate, with non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, green beans, lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, bok choy, peppers or onions.
- Use one of the smaller sections, or ¼ of the plate, for starchy foods like whole grain breads, cereal, oatmeal, grits, cream of wheat, rice, pasta, tortillas, potatoes, sweet potatoes, green peas, corn, lima beans, pinto beans or black-eyed peas.
- Save the last 1/4 of the plate for protein and meat substitutes like lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts or tofu.

Just add a serving of low-fat milk or yogurt and a piece of fruit or fruit salad, and you have a well-balanced meal.





Spending a little time and effort developing your healthy lifestyle now can save you lots of time, money and even your life in the long run. You can do it!

Reading Labels

Most foods have nutrition labels that can help you make informed choices. When reading labels, it's important to take note of the serving size and the number of servings in the package. What you may think is a single serving could be double (or more) than the recommended serving. Scan nutrients such as sodium, fiber, carbohydrates, proteins, cholesterol, total fats and saturated fats per serving, and use the guide to learn what to look for.

Sample label for Macaroni & Cheese

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (228 g) Servings Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 207	Calories from Fat 56		
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat 6.2g	10%		
Saturated Fat 2.2g	11%		
Monounsaturated Fat 1.5g			
Cholesterol 15mg	5%		
Sodium 1061mg	44%		
Total Carbohydrate 29.0g	10%		
Dietary Fiber 1.3g	5%		
Sugars 1.3g			
Protein 8.5g			
Vitamin A 3%			
Vitamin C 0%			
Calcium 9%			
Iron 13%			
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
	Calorie	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrates		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

1. Start Here

2. Check Calories

3. Limit these Nutrients

4. Get enough of these Nutrients

5. Footnote

6. Quick Guide to Percent Daily Value:

- 5% or less is low
- 20% or more is high

Carb Counting

Carbohydrate ("carb") counting is a great way to manage blood sugars. The total number of carbs you should eat depends on your age, weight and activity level. Most women need 45-60g per meal and men can have 60-75g per meal. To balance your meals, be sure to add servings of protein and "good" fats like canola or olive oil.

Reading nutrition labels and understanding serving sizes are important elements of carb counting. To help you plan your meals, consider the following foods containing around 15g of carbs:

- 1 small piece of fresh fruit (4 oz.)
- ½ cup of canned or frozen fruit
- 1 slice of bread (1 oz.) or 1 (6 inch) tortilla
- ½ cup of oatmeal
- ⅓ cup of pasta or rice
- 4-6 crackers
- ½ English muffin or hamburger bun
- ½ cup of black beans or starchy vegetable such as corn and peas
- ¼ of a large baked potato (3 oz.)
- ⅔ cup of plain fat-free yogurt or sweetened with sugar substitutes
- 2 small cookies
- 2 inch square brownie or cake without frosting
- ½ cup ice cream or sherbet
- 1 Tbsp syrup, jam, jelly, sugar or honey
- 2 Tbsp light syrup
- 6 chicken nuggets
- ½ cup of casserole
- 1 cup of soup
- ¼ serving of a medium order of french fries

Resources:

www.diabetes.org; www.cancer.org; www.lungusa.org; www.doh.state.fl.us; www.heart.org

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Diabetes Wellness Log

To manage your diabetes and prevent complications, regular screenings are recommended. The American Diabetes Association suggests the following targets for most nonpregnant adults with diabetes.* More or less stringent glycemic goals may be appropriate for each individual. Bring this wellness log sheet to your next visit with your health care provider.

Screening	Normal Ranges	Dates/ Results				
Every Visit						
*Blood Pressure-Systolic	<120					
*Blood Pressure-Diastolic	<80					
Weight						
Activity Level						
Smoking Status						
Meal Plan						
Blood Glucose Fasting	70-130 mg/dL					
Blood Glucose 2 Hrs After Meal	<180 mg/dL					
At Least 2 Times Year						
HbA1c <i>(This test measures average blood glucose control for the past 2 to 3 months).</i>	7% or less					
At Least Every Year						
Physical Exam						
*Total Cholesterol	<200					
*LDL (Bad Cholesterol)	<100					
*HDL (Good Cholesterol)	40 or more for men; 60 or more for women					
*Ratio	<5.0					
*Triglycerides	<150					
Microalbuminuria/GFR						
Foot Exam						
DRE (Dilated Retinal Eye Exam)						
Flu Shot						
Diabetes Education						
One Time						
Pneumonia Shot						