



Diabetes Newsletter

2004 Edition

Volume 2 Issue 3

What Is Diabetes?



Diabetes means that your blood glucose (often called blood sugar) is too high. Your blood always has some glucose in it because your body needs glucose for energy to keep you going. However, too much glucose in the blood isn't good for your health.

Glucose comes from the food you eat and is also made in your liver and muscles. Your blood carries the glucose to all the cells in your body. Insulin is a chemical (a hormone) made in a part of the body

called the pancreas. The pancreas releases insulin into the blood. Insulin helps the glucose from food get into your cells. If your body doesn't make enough insulin or if the insulin doesn't work the way it should, glucose can't get into your cells. It stays in your blood instead. Your blood glucose level then gets too high, causing you to have diabetes.

Three Types Of Diabetes

Type 1 Diabetes:

Formerly called juvenile diabetes and insulin-dependent diabetes, is usually diagnosed in children, teenagers, or young adults. In this form of diabetes, the beta cells of the pancreas no longer make insulin because the body's immune system has attacked and destroyed them. Treatment for *type 1* diabetes includes taking insulin shots or using an insulin pump, making wise food choices, exercising regularly, taking aspirin daily, and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol.

Type 2 Diabetes:

Formerly called adult-onset diabetes or non-insulin-dependent diabetes, is the most common form of diabetes. People can develop *type 2* diabetes at any age — even during childhood. In *type 2* diabetes, the pancreas does not make enough insulin, and the fat, muscle, or liver cells do not use it properly. Being overweight can increase the chances

of developing *type 2* diabetes. Treatment includes using diabetes medicines, making wise food choices, exercising regularly, taking aspirin daily, and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol.

Gestational Diabetes:

Some women develop *gestational diabetes* during the late stages of pregnancy. Although this form of diabetes usually goes away after the baby is born, a woman who has had it is more likely to develop *type 2* diabetes later in life. *Gestational diabetes* is caused by the hormones of pregnancy or a shortage of insulin.

What Are The Signs?

- ▶ Being very thirsty
- ▶ Urinating often
- ▶ Feeling very hungry or tired
- ▶ Losing weight without trying
- ▶ Having sores that heal slowly
- ▶ Having dry, itchy skin
- ▶ Losing the feeling in your feet or having tingling in your feet
- ▶ Having blurry eyesight

You may have had one or more of these signs before you found out you had diabetes. Or you may have had no signs at all.

*A publication of
Vision Salon Eye Care Associates
Adult & Pediatric
Comprehensive Eye Care*

*"Where there is no vision,
the people perish..." Proverbs 29:18*

Treatment Options

What if I have Type 1 diabetes?

Type 1 is the type of diabetes that people most often get before 30 years of age. All people with type 1 diabetes need to take insulin because their bodies do not make enough of it. Insulin helps turn food into energy for the body to work.

What if I have Type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 is the type of diabetes most people get as adults after the age of 40. But you can also get this kind of diabetes at a younger age.

Healthy eating, exercise, and losing weight may help you lower your blood glucose (also called blood sugar) when you find out you have type 2 diabetes. If these treatments do not work, you may need one or more types of diabetes pills to lower your blood glucose. After a few more years, you may need to take insulin shots because your body is not making enough insulin.

African Americans and Diabetes

Approximately 2.7 million or 11.4% of all African Americans aged 20 years or older have diabetes. However, one-third of them do not know it.

The most life-threatening consequences of diabetes are heart disease and stroke, which strike people with diabetes more than twice as often as they do others. Adults with diabetes have heart disease death rates 2 to 4 times higher than those without diabetes. African Americans with diabetes are at increased risk for heart disease, stroke and other macrovascular

complications. Other complications of diabetes include blindness, kidney disease, and amputations.

Diabetes is the fifth deadliest disease in the United States, and it has no cure. The total annual economic cost of diabetes in 2002 was estimated to be \$132 billion, or one out of every 10 health care dollars spent in the United States.

African Americans are 1.6 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites.

25% of African Americans between the ages of 65 and 74 have diabetes.

One in four African American women over 55 years of age has diabetes.

Can Diabetes Cause Vision Problems?

Vision impairment is a frequent complication of diabetes, for both type 1 and type 2.

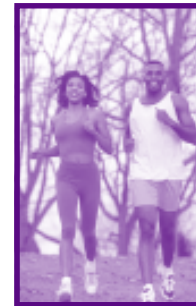
The major cause of blindness in people with diabetes is diabetic retinopathy. Diabetic retinopathy is a term used for all the abnormalities of the small blood vessels of the retina caused by diabetes, such as weakening of blood vessel walls or leakage from blood vessels. Retinopathy progresses from non-proliferative or background retinopathy to proliferative retinopathy.

People with type 1 diabetes should see their eye care professional annually for a dilated eye examination beginning five years after the onset of diabetes. Women with type 1 who are pregnant should have a comprehensive eye examination in the first trimester and close follow-up throughout pregnancy.

People with type 2 diabetes should see their eye care professional for a dilated eye examination shortly after diagnosis of diabetes and annually thereafter.

The key to preventing diabetes-related eye problems is good control of blood glucose levels, a healthy diet and good eye care.

Patient Education Is Critical



People with diabetes can reduce their risk for complications if they are educated about their disease, learn and practice the skills necessary to better control their blood glucose,

blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and receive regular checkups from their health care team. Smokers should stop smoking, and overweight individuals should develop moderate exercise regimens under the guidance of a health care provider to help them achieve a healthy weight and make healthy food choices.



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