

DIABETES

SMART CHOICES FOR A

What Is Diabetes?

The food you eat is turned into sugar (called glucose). The cells in your body use this sugar for energy. Sugar gets into your cells with the help of insulin. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use its own insulin as well as it should. This causes sugar to build up in your blood.

Why Is Diabetes Dangerous?

Over time, diabetes can cause problems throughout your body. These problems include:

- Heart attack.
- Stroke.
- Eye disease that can lead to blindness.
- Kidney disease.
- Numbness of the feet which can lead to infections and amputation.

Regular medical care and control of the blood sugar levels can help prevent these problems from happening.

What Are The Symptoms Of Diabetes?

Many people with diabetes feel healthy and don't have symptoms. When they do have symptoms, the most common are:

- Need to urinate frequently.
- Feeling thirsty all the time.
- Blurred vision.

Should I Be Tested For Diabetes?

You should be tested if:

- You are age 45 years or older.
- You are overweight.
- Diabetes runs in your family.
- You have high blood pressure.

How Will I Be Tested For Diabetes?

There are two blood tests commonly used to check for diabetes: fasting blood sugar and hemoglobin A1C.

What Do My Test Numbers Mean?

The fasting blood sugar test is done when you have not had anything to eat or drink for 8 hours or longer.

What your results mean:

DIABETES	126 or higher
PRE-DIABETES	100 to 125
NORMAL	99 or lower

The hemoglobin A1C test measures your average blood sugar level over the past 2 to 3 months.

What your results mean:

DIABETES	6.5% or higher
PRE-DIABETES	5.7% - 6.4%
NORMAL	5.6% or lower



What Else Can I Do?

Always ask what your blood sugar or hemoglobin A1C is and write it down. Discuss these numbers with your health care provider.

If your blood sugar is high your provider may prescribe medicine to help lower your blood sugar.

- Take your medicine every day, or as directed by your provider.
- Don't stop your medicine or take a lower dose unless your provider says you should.

Here are some questions to ask your health care provider:

- Should I be tested for diabetes?
- Is my blood sugar under good control?
- What should my blood sugar or hemoglobin A1C be?
- How often should I have my blood sugar or hemoglobin A1C checked?
- What is a healthy weight for me?
- Is it safe for me to start getting more exercise?

If your blood sugar is normal, that's great! Have it checked every 3 years to be sure it stays within the normal range.

If your blood sugar is high, your test should be repeated on another day to confirm that you have diabetes or pre-diabetes.

What Is Pre-Diabetes?

If your blood sugar is above the normal range, but not high enough to be diabetes, you have pre-diabetes. Pre-diabetes is serious – it increases your risk of heart attack and stroke. Many people who have pre-diabetes will develop diabetes.

What Can I Do To Prevent Diabetes?

Take charge of your health! Reduce your risk of diabetes with healthy habits.

1. Maintain a healthy weight.

- If you are overweight, ask your provider for help with a plan for eating a healthy diet to lose weight.
- Even a small weight loss may prevent you from developing diabetes.

2. Be active – get moving!

- Walk, swim, rake leaves, go dancing – any activity that raises your heart rate is good for you.
- Be active for 10 minutes or more at a time. Aim for at least 30 minutes of activity a day on 5 or more days each week.

This brochure was produced by:



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