

# Diabetes

*Over nine million women in the U.S. have diabetes. And three million of them don't even know it!*

## Did you know that...?

- Diabetes increases the chances of having a heart attack or stroke.
- 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.

## What is diabetes?

- Diabetes is a disease that changes the way your body uses sugar. The food you eat turns to sugar. The sugar then travels through the blood to all parts of the body. Usually, 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 responding to 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 type 1 must take insulin every day to stay alive.
- **Type 2**—The body does not use insulin the way it should. 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)?
- Does diabetes run in your family?
- Are you a woman who had diabetes when you were pregnant?
- Have you had a baby who weighed more than nine pounds or more 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?

Some people with diabetes notice:

- Going to the bathroom a lot
- Feeling hungry or thirsty all the time
- Blurred vision
- Cuts or bruises that are slow to heal
- Feeling tired all the time
- Hands or feet that tingle or feel numb

***Most people with diabetes do not notice any signs***



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## What can I do if I have diabetes?

### *Use medicines wisely*

- Sometimes people with diabetes need to take pills or insulin shots. 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.

### *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.
- Be active at least 30 minutes a day, most days of the week. Exercise helps your body use insulin better.

## *Check your blood sugar and know your ABC's*

- Help prevent heart disease and stroke by keeping your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol under control.
- Check your blood sugar with a test you can use at home.
- Ask your doctor for an A-1-C (“A-one-see”) blood test. It checks blood sugar levels over 2 to 3 months.
- Talk to your health care team about your ABC's:

**A-1-C**

**Blood pressure**

**Cholesterol**

**FDA Office of Women's Health** <http://www.fda.gov/womens>

## To Learn More:

**Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Diabetes Information**

<http://www.fda.gov/diabetes>