

# Control your diabetes *For Life!*

Circular 569 B

## Who Gets Diabetes?

Sixteen million Americans have diabetes—one out of three do not know it!

Symptoms of diabetes can go unnoticed.

People who have diabetes may not feel sick enough to visit a doctor.

Some people have a higher risk for developing diabetes than others.

Diabetes is diagnosed by a simple blood test.

Early detection and control of diabetes can prevent complications and save lives.



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### Are you “at risk” for diabetes?

Sixteen million Americans have diabetes. But one-third of the people with the disease don't know that they have it! By knowing your risk (chances) of developing diabetes, you can help your health care provider diagnose diabetes early. Type 2 diabetes often is not diagnosed until disease complications develop. People who have diabetes may not feel sick enough to see a doctor until they begin to experience problems with vision, kidneys, legs and feet, or they have unexplained infections or wounds that won't heal. Diagnosing diabetes early and controlling blood glucose levels can prevent or postpone many diabetes complications.

According to the **American Diabetes Association (ADA)**, the following factors may put you **at risk** for diabetes:

- age 45 years and above
- overweight
- family history of diabetes (parents or siblings)
- Hispanic, Native American, Asian American, African American, or Pacific Islander
- have delivered a baby weighing more than 9 pounds or have been diagnosed with gestational diabetes
- high blood pressure
- high blood cholesterol or triglyceride levels

If you have one or more of these factors, the ADA recommends annual testing for diabetes.

## Signs and Symptoms of Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is called a silent killer, because people can have the disease for a long time without knowing it. High levels of glucose in the blood (hyperglycemia) develop gradually and can go undetected since symptoms may not be obvious. Diabetes is often discovered only after complications from having high blood glucose levels for a long time have developed. When glucose builds up in the blood, the kidneys work hard to flush out the excess, causing thirst and the need to urinate often. People with untreated diabetes often get hungry and tired, because the body is not able to use food the way it should. High blood glucose levels over a long time are responsible for the cell and tissue damage that causes diabetes complications.

If you are at risk for diabetes, know the signs and symptoms:

- frequent urination
- unplanned weight loss
- unusual thirst
- hunger
- blurred vision
- dry, itchy skin
- sores heal slowly
- tingling or numbness in legs
- cuts or bruises heal slowly
- irritability
- tired or drowsy

## Diagnosing Diabetes

Diabetes is diagnosed by your health care provider with a simple blood test. If you have any of the symptoms mentioned above, or if you have any of the risk factors for diabetes, make an appointment to see your health care provider now.

**Diabetes can be controlled—diabetes complications can be prevented!**

## Where to Go for More Information

Your health care provider

American Diabetes Association:  
**1-800-DIABETES**

National Diabetes Education Program:  
**1-800-438-5383** or visit the World Wide Web at **ndep.nih.gov** or **www.cdc.gov**

Your county Extension office

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