

Diabetes Prevention

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. There are 23.6 million children and adults in the United States, or 7.8% of the population, with diabetes. Unfortunately, nearly one quarter of these people are unaware that they have the disease. The prevalence of diabetes is higher among the African American, Latino, Native American, Asian American and Pacific Islander populations. Having diabetes puts one at risk for a whole host of complications including: heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, nerve damage, circulatory problems, amputation, skin disorders, musculo-skeletal conditions, gastrointestinal problems, depression and sexual dysfunction.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disorder in which the body does not produce and/or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is produced by the pancreas. Most cells in the body must use insulin to transfer blood glucose into the cell, where it is converted into energy needed for life. The cause of diabetes continues to be a mystery, although both genetics and environmental factors play roles. There are four major types of diabetes-type 1, type 2, gestational (Type 3) and treatment-induced (Type 4). In addition, 57 million Americans have pre-diabetes (blood sugar levels higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes). About 5-10% of persons with diabetes have Type 1. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes in the U.S. Type 2 diabetes occurs when body cells become insulin resistant (a condition in which the body fails to properly use insulin) and/or insulin deficient (body fails to produce adequate insulin).

Who is at risk for diabetes?

- Age (those > than 40 years)
- Overweight (BMI \geq 25 or \geq 23 if Asian American or \geq 26 if Pacific Islander)
- High blood pressure (>140/90 mm/Hg)
- Abnormal cholesterol levels (HDL < 40 mg/dL for men, HDL < 50 mg/dL for women; or triglycerides \geq 250 mg/dL)
- Family history (parent, brother or sister with diabetes)
- Ethnicity (African American, Native American Indian, Asian American, Latino, or Pacific Islander heritage)
- History of gestational diabetes (having given birth to baby weighing > than 9 pounds)
- Inactive lifestyle (exercise \leq than 3 times per week)

Who should get tested for diabetes?

- Anyone older than 40, who is overweight should be tested every three years.
- Anyone younger than 40 who is overweight and who has any of the above risk factors should also be tested every three years.

How can I get tested for diabetes?

- Talk to your McKinley Health Care provider if you would like to be tested.

Can diabetes be prevented?

- Yes. Results from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Diabetes Prevention Program demonstrated that type 2 diabetes can be delayed or prevented through lifestyle modification.

How can I prevent diabetes?

- Lose 5-7% of body weight if you are overweight.
- Follow a low fat meal plan.
- Get active at least 30 minutes per day, 5 times per week.

You can make an appointment to see a Certified Diabetes Educator and/or Fitness Educator if you need help developing a lifestyle modification program to prevent diabetes by calling 333-2714 or 244-0261.

Want more information?

National Diabetes Education Program / Web site at: www.ndep.nih.gov

American Diabetes Association / Web site at: www.diabetes.org

American Association of Diabetes Educators / Web site: www.aadenet.org

Your Guide to Diet and Diabetes – U of I Extension Office / Web site at: www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/diabetes2/

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: **Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700**

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: <http://www.mckinley.uiuc.edu>