

DIABETES: Know Your Risks, Raise Your Awareness, and Take Action.

Diabetes is the leading public health crisis of the 21st century, and it continues to grow at epidemic proportions. Many people who have diabetes don't even know it. Whether you have diabetes or want to prevent it, simple lifestyle changes can help you stay healthy. Take action today to control your risk tomorrow.

Diagnosis by the Numbers

Diabetes dates back to ancient times. Ancient Egyptian records described the disease, and the first diagnosis was about 600 B.C. It was even recognized early on that people who were younger and thinner had a different type of disease than people who were older and overweight. Ancient Indian physicians (about 300 B.C.) used ants or insects to aid in the diagnosis of diabetes, since the “honey sweet” urine attracted ants. In the 11th century, diagnosis was made by “water tasters” who drank the urine of those suspected of having diabetes. Fortunately the diagnostic methods have come a long way since early times!

There are **THREE BLOOD TESTS** used to diagnosis diabetes or pre-diabetes.

- **A1C TEST** measures a person's average blood glucose level over the previous 2 to 3 months.
 - **DIABETES = 6.5% or higher. PRE-DIABETES = 5.7–6.4%.**
- **FASTING PLASMA GLUCOSE** measures blood glucose levels after not eating for at least 8 hours.
 - **DIABETES = 126 mg/dl or higher. PRE-DIABETES = 100–126.**
- **ORAL GLUCOSE TOLERANCE TEST** is taken 2 hours after drinking a large amount of glucose.
 - **DIABETES = 200 mg/dl or higher. PRE-DIABETES = 140-200.**

Diabetes can also be diagnosed if a person has classic symptoms of high blood glucose (i.e. frequent urination, unusual thirst, extreme hunger and unusual weight loss) and has a random blood glucose of 200 mg/dl or higher. But, not everyone experiences warning signs of diabetes—that's why it's important to know the risk factors and know your numbers. Don't assume that a lack of symptoms means that everything is okay.

A Look at the Numbers

- **FACT: Diabetes affects 25.8 million people or 8.3% of the U.S. population (18.8 million people are diagnosed and 7.0 million are undiagnosed).**
- **FACT: Pre-diabetes is estimated affect 35% of U.S. adults age 20 and older, with 50% of adults age 65 and older having pre-diabetes. This is about 79 million American adults.**
- **FACT: Diabetes is the 7th leading cause of death in the U.S. and is the #1 cause of kidney failure, non-traumatic lower-limb amputations, and new cases of blindness among adults in the U.S.**
- **FACT: Medical expenses for people with diabetes are more than 2 times higher than for people without diabetes.**
- **FACT: Someone in the U.S. is diagnosed with diabetes about every 16 seconds.**

It's a Numbers Game

Glucose, a basic form of sugar, travels through the bloodstream to provide the body's cells with energy. The body usually tightly regulates the amount of glucose that is circulating in the bloodstream. People with diabetes or pre-diabetes have high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both.

It's not okay to have "a little bit of *sugar*." Talk to your doctor about a prevention plan if you're at risk for diabetes or work with your doctor to keep your diabetes well controlled if you already have it. Regular medical check-ups and a healthy lifestyle can dramatically lower the risk of developing diabetes or complications from diabetes. (If you have diabetes, call the Member Services number on the back of your Highmark ID card for information on home blood glucose monitors.)

- **WORK ON LOSING WEIGHT, IF OVERWEIGHT.**

Losing 5 to 7 percent can significantly lower your risk—that's 10 to 14 pounds for a 200-pound person. Reduce your number of calories by 250 to 500 per day by decreasing portions and leaving 2 to 3 bites of food on your plate.

FYI: 250 CALORIES is an average candy bar, and 500 CALORIES is a typical dessert.

- **STRIVE TO GET SOME EXERCISE EVERY DAY.**

Work up to 30 to 60 minutes of moderate exercise 5 to 7 days a week, such as brisk walking.

FYI: 30 MINUTES is about a 2-MILE walk.

- **MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES AND EAT REGULAR MEALS AND SNACKS.**

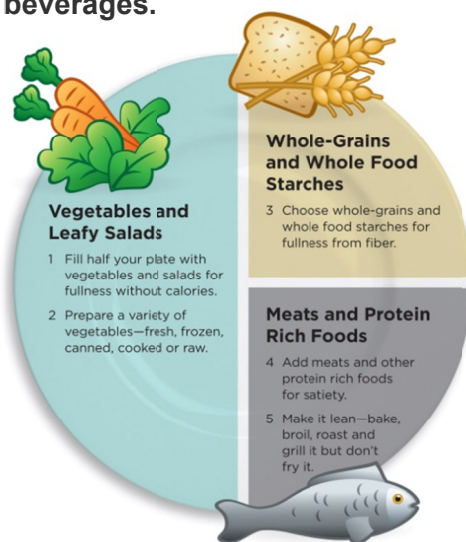
Choose high fiber, whole grain foods with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving. Eat 5 to 9 servings of fresh fruits and vegetables, and drink water and other 0-calorie beverages.

FYI: 10 TEASPOONS of sugar is in a typical can of soda.

- **USE OUR PLATE PLANNER TO CONTROL PORTIONS.**

Adding Up the Numbers \$\$

Diabetes is a huge financial burden on individuals, their families, employers, and society, because it touches so many lives every day. Estimates of the total overall costs of diabetes in the U.S., including direct medical costs and indirect costs like disability, lost workdays, restricted activity days, and premature death, is \$174 billion a year (CDC, 2011).



Where to Turn for Help

- **CALL BLUES ON CALLSM.**

As a Highmark member, you can work with a health coach — who comes from a team of registered nurses and lifestyle specialists — to help you better manage your diabetes. They will keep you up to date with the latest information, offer treatment plan guidance, and provide educational materials, videos, and other tools to help make managing your diabetes a little easier. To contact a health coach, call the toll-free number on the back of your Highmark Member ID card (1-888-BLUE(2583)-428).

- **ENROLL IN AN ONLINE HEALTH PROGRAM FOR CARING FOR DIABETES.**

Go to your Member website at www.highmarkblueshield.com, and follow the login instructions. Under the "Health Information Center," click on "Managing Health Conditions" to review the "Health Condition Resources" available to you, including educational tools, articles and programs.