

## Diabetes

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic disease that causes an increased level of sugar in the blood. There is no cure for diabetes, but it can be controlled. If untreated, diabetes can be a risk factor for heart disease. It can also lead to blindness, limb amputations, or kidney failure.



There are 2 types of diabetes:

1. Type I (Insulin-Dependent) - usually occurs during childhood and is caused by the inability of the pancreas to produce insulin. People with this type of diabetes must be treated with insulin injections and must monitor their blood glucose levels.
2. Type II (Non-Insulin Dependent) - adult-onset diabetes caused by insulin not working as it should. People with this type of diabetes may receive oral medications, insulin, or both.

### Signs and Symptoms of Diabetes:

- Extreme thirst
- Frequent urination
- Blurred vision
- Unexplained weight loss
- Poor healing of infections, sores, or wounds
- Feeling very tired

If you have any or all of the above symptoms you should contact your physician. People who are overweight, have cholesterol abnormalities, high blood pressure or a family history of diabetes are at a greater risk for developing diabetes.

### Treatment of Diabetes

- Learn to balance your diet. Eating right is essential to diabetes management. You should speak to a diabetes nutritionist regarding setting specific goals for yourself.

*This resource provides brief, general information about this health care topic. It does not take the place of the instructions you receive from your health care providers. Discuss the risks and benefits of therapies with your doctor and always take medication as prescribed. For answers to other questions talk to your health care provider.*

**For more information or a referral, please call the NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Preventive Cardiology Program at (212) 305-4866 or visit our website at:**

**<http://www.hearthealthtimes.com>.**



- In general, you should avoid sugary foods and simple carbohydrates (such as white bread), eat less fat and salt, control your weight, pick foods from all the food groups to get everything needed in your diet, and limit alcoholic beverages.
- Take medications as recommended. Whether taking insulin or diabetes pills, make sure to follow your doctor's instructions closely when it comes to medications and report any problems or abnormal side effects you might experience.
- Exercise. Exercise can help you control your blood sugar and weight and also give you more energy. The goal for those without heart disease is to obtain 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise every day. The goal for people with heart disease is to exercise a minimum of 3 days per week for 30-60 minutes per session. Your doctor may put a limit on the intensity of your exercise but, in general, walking is safe and effective for most people.
- Always carry fast-acting sugar or juice with you in case your blood sugar gets too low. Symptoms of low blood sugar (or hypoglycemia) include fainting, weakness, nervousness/tremors, headache, hunger, confusion, and slurred speech.
- Let people know that you are a diabetic.
- Wear a medic alert bracelet. If you do not have one, call 1-800-432-5378 to get one.
- Remember, do not exercise when insulin peaks or if ketones are present. If you feel shaky or dizzy while exercising:
  1. Stop exercising.
  2. Take fast-acting sugar.
  3. Rest.
  4. Check your blood sugar.
  5. Eat a snack.

#### Goals:

- Maintain a fasting glucose < 100 mg/dL or a non-fasting glucose < 140 mg/dL.
- Maintain HbA1C < 7% (HbA1C is a test of overall glucose management over a 3 month period).

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