

Determining Your Risk for Diabetes

As defined by the American Diabetes Association, diabetes is a group of diseases characterized by high blood glucose levels that result from defects in the body's ability to produce and/or use insulin.

With two types of diabetes, it can be confusing to know who is at risk, what the symptoms are, and most importantly what you can do to prevent either type from afflicting you or a loved one.

Type 1 diabetes generally afflicts younger people, including children. Type 1 diabetes is a result of the body not producing insulin, and is a serious lifetime disease that usually necessitates having insulin levels checked daily.

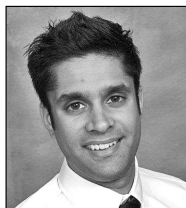
Type 2 diabetes is most prevalent in adults who are overweight, with a BMI (body mass index) greater than 25, have high blood pressure, and lead a sedentary lifestyle. Type 2 can be controlled with medication and by managing your weight and exercising.

It's common knowledge that eating right and exercising are good for you, but with a variety of new fad diets and fitness experts it can be difficult to determine your best course of action. Taking the time to reflect on your lifestyle, even recording your daily food intake, and sitting down with your doctor to discuss ways to improve your health are excellent steps you can take to reduce your risk.

Symptoms of diabetes can include urinating more often, feeling dehydrated and needing to drink more water than you normally consume, and in some cases even losing weight. With a simple pre-diabetes blood test, conducted at your doctor's office, you can find out quickly if

you are at risk. If you're labeled as pre-diabetic the good news is that you can prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes with healthy eating, exercise, and maintaining a healthy weight. Having a family history is also a risk factor, and it's important to discuss this with your doctor.

By being proactive and making healthy choices every day, anyone, even those with a family history, can prevent diabetes and the complications it brings. These choices can have long-lasting results for years to come, and it's important to have an open dialogue with your doctor to identify what steps you can take to continue to live your best life.



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