

Wellness Culture

November Observance: American Diabetes Month

Key Information: Diabetes occurs when there is too much sugar in your blood and urine. Normally, our bodies produce insulin, which helps to break down the sugar so that it can be released into the body for energy. Without insulin, the body does not produce enough energy to work properly; like a car that does not get enough gas to run.

3 Types of Diabetes: Type 1 is when the body does not make any insulin and is controlled by taking insulin daily; Type 2, the most common form, is when the body does not make enough insulin this is controlled by lifestyle changes or medications; Gestational is the type that is first diagnosed in pregnancy and is controlled by lifestyle changes or medications.

Could You Be at Risk?

- **Age:** risk increases with age (especially 45 years and older).
- **Being Overweight:** A Body Mass Index (BMI) 25 or higher (23 or higher if Asian American, 26 or higher if Pacific Islander) Ask your healthcare provider to calculate BMI for you or search for a BMI calculator on the internet.
- **Family History of diabetes:** having a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** African American, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American, Pacific Islander or Hispanic/Latino Heritage
- **History of Gestational Diabetes:** also giving birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds.
- **Blood Pressure:** 140/90 mmHg or higher
- **Cholesterol:** HDL (the good stuff) less than 40 for men and less than 50 for women; triglyceride level 250 or higher.
- **Inactive Lifestyle:** exercises fewer than three times a week.

Action Steps Made Easy:

1. **Be pro-active; find out if you are at risk by talking to your healthcare provider.**
2. **Set 2-3 realistic goals for change: For example, I will get 15 minutes of physical activity a day this week. Add five minutes each week, building up to the recommended 30 minutes, seven days a week.**
3. **Make 2-3 better food choices/changes. For example, I will choose baked or grilled foods, instead of fried.**
4. **Keep a food and/or exercise log: For example, try writing down everything you eat or drink for 1 week. A food and exercise diary is one of the most effective methods to lose weight and keep it off. Review diary with your healthcare provider.**

Life Impact: Every human being is the author of his or her own health and disease.

Resources: The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP)-www.ndep.nih.gov
American Diabetes Association-www.diabetes.org



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