



of the U.S. population has diabetes. That means 30.3 million Americans have this disease.

## Diabetes

Aerobic exercise makes your heart and bones strong, relieves stress, and lowers your risk of type 2 diabetes. Examples include brisk walking, swimming and dancing.

### What is diabetes?

Our bodies use the food we eat for energy. The food is turned into glucose (sugar) and then the pancreas (an organ near the stomach) produces the hormone insulin to move the sugar into the cells of our bodies. If you have diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin and sugar builds up in your blood.

### Why prevent or properly manage diabetes?

Extra sugar in the blood may not sound like a big deal but diabetes is a serious disease with serious health complications including:

- Heart disease
- Kidney failure
- Blindness
- Lower-extremity issues

## Are you at risk?

It's important to know your risk factors. There are risk factors you cannot control such as:

- **Family history**—any blood relative with diabetes increases your own risk
- **Ethnic background**—you are at a greater risk if you are African American, Latino/Hispanic American, Native American or Pacific Islander
- **Age**—the older you are, the greater your risk
- **History** of gestational diabetes

Risk factors you can make an impact on are:

- Overweight/obesity
- Physical inactivity
- High blood pressure
- Abnormal cholesterol levels

## Prevention

Because there is no cure for diabetes, the focus is on prevention. If you have risk factors or are pre-diabetic, ways to prevent or delay onset of diabetes include:

- **Get physically active.** Just 30 minutes of aerobic exercise, 5 times a week, reduces your risk of diabetes. If you haven't been active, start with 5-10 minutes a day and work your way up to 30 minutes gradually.
- **If you smoke or use tobacco—quit.**
- **Eat healthy.** You are more likely to adopt healthy eating habits if you start with small changes. Look for ways to make your meals healthy by choosing:
  - **Non-starchy veggies**—carrots, broccoli, green beans, kale, cauliflower
  - **Lean meats**—skinless chicken and turkey, lean cuts of pork and beef
  - **Low-fat dairy products**—skim milk, fat-free yogurts
  - **Whole grains**—brown rice, farro, quinoa
  - **Healthy fats in small amounts**—olive, canola, sunflower and peanut oil

## Symptoms

If you think you might have diabetes, you should schedule a visit with your primary care provider (PCP). Some symptoms of diabetes are:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Unexplained weight loss
- Sudden vision changes
- Extreme hunger
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Fatigue

## Treatment

Properly managing diabetes is key to living a longer and healthier life. If you get diagnosed with diabetes, it is important to work closely with your PCP and health care team and follow their instructions. Treatment typically includes:

- Diet control
- Home glucose testing
- Exercise
- Oral medication and/or insulin

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Sources:

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/>

<https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/diabetes>

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pdfs/data/statistics/national-diabetes-statistics-report.pdf>