



Are You At Risk for Diabetes?

Diabetes is a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. Diabetes can lead to premature death and serious medical complications, including blindness, kidney damage, cardiovascular disease, and lower-limb amputations. People with diabetes can take steps to control the disease and lower the risk of complication. Even people who do not have diabetes, but are at risk, can take steps to control their risk.

Almost 24 million Americans have diabetes, including as many as 6 million individuals who have diabetes and don't know it. Diabetes kills more people than AIDS and breast cancer combined. There are different levels related to diabetes. This tip focuses on type-2 diabetes and pre-diabetes.

What is type-2 diabetes?

Type-2 diabetes accounts for about 90% - 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. It usually begins as insulin resistance, a disorder in which the cells do not use insulin properly. As the need for insulin rises, the pancreas gradually loses its ability to produce it.

Many people with type-2 diabetes can control their blood glucose by following a healthy meal plan and exercise program, losing excess weight, and taking oral medication. Some people with type-2 diabetes may also need insulin to control their blood glucose.

What is pre-diabetes?

Pre-diabetes is a condition in which individuals have blood glucose levels higher than normal, but not high enough to be classified as diabetes. People with pre-diabetes have an increased risk of developing type-2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. People with pre-diabetes can prevent the development of type-2 diabetes by making changes in their diet and increasing their level of physical activity.

Risk factors for pre-diabetes include:

- Body Mass Index (BMI) \geq 30
- Family history of diabetes
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Age 50 or older
- Had baby weight 9 pounds or more
- History of elevated blood glucose
- Abnormal lipids and/or triglyceride

Source: Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

For more information about diabetes, its risks, and prevention, go to
www.diabetes.org or cdc.gov.