



Top 5 Health Issues: Diabetes

Diabetes, familiarly known as "the suga", is anything but a sweet disease. It has consequences that affect almost every organ of the body, from the eyes to the feet. Dr. V has complied facts and information below to keep you in the know.

EVERY DAY 4,000 people are diagnosed with diabetes. According to the Department of Health and Human Services "More than 7% of the American population has diabetes." That means more than 20.8 million adults are affected by this traumatic disease.

6.2 million of these people DON'T EVEN KNOW they are affected, as they are undiagnosed. There are another 41 million Americans who are PRE-DIABETIC (explained below). Minorities are disproportionately affected and minority women, in particular, are 2-4 times more likely to be affected than white women.

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease of elevated blood sugar. Diabetics have difficulty converting food into usable energy. Food is broken down into three different building blocks: carbohydrates, protein, and fat. When consumed, carbohydrates (potatoes, sweets, chips) are broken down into simple sugars. A non-diabetic's pancreas secretes insulin as a response, to re-absorb the sugars for the bodies' use, lowering the glucose level of the blood.

When a diabetic eats, however, either no insulin (Type 1 Diabetes), very little insulin, or non-functional insulin (Type 2 Diabetes) is secreted, none of which help re-absorb sugars. As a result, the blood glucose levels in their bodies remain high.

What are the different kinds of Diabetes?

Type 1 Diabetes, also known as juvenile diabetes or insulin dependent diabetes, is an autoimmune disease (any disease that causes the body to attack itself) in which the pancreas' beta cells make little or NO insulin. Patients with Type 1 need daily insulin injections to live and represent 5-10% of all diabetics. It primarily affects children and teens.



Type 2 Diabetes, is the most common form. It is also referred to as non-insulin dependent diabetes, or adult onset diabetes. In this disease, the body makes insulin but the muscle, liver and fat are RESISTANT to it. This leads to high levels of glucose in the blood and all the subsequent complications of diabetes. Researchers don't know why Type 2 develops but believe that excess weight and fatty tissue have a high correlation to its occurrence.

Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes are different diseases and Type 1 does not develop into Type 2.

Gestational Diabetes develops during pregnancy and affects 4% of pregnant women in the US. It usually occurs in the 2nd or 3rd trimester when released hormones cause insulin resistance. When the baby is born, Gestational Diabetes resolves, however, up to 50% of those affected will develop Type 2 Diabetes later in life.

Pre-Diabetes is not diabetes but it increases one's risk of developing type 2 diabetes. These patients have blood glucose levels higher than normal but not high enough to diagnose diabetes. These patients are also at increased risk of developing heart disease and stroke

What are the signs and symptoms of diabetes?

1. Excessive thirst
2. Increased urination
3. Flu like feeling - weakness, loss of appetite, fatigue
4. Unintentional weight loss or gain
5. Blurred vision
6. Slow healing wounds
7. Frequent infections, including bladder and urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women
8. Tingling hands or feet
9. Red, swollen and tender gums

**** It is also possible to have diabetes with NO SYMPTOMS AT ALL!!!**



What are the risk factors for diabetes?

1. Family history, such as a parent or sibling with diabetes
2. Weight - OBESITY - is the number one risk factor for developing diabetes, especially if you carry your weight in your middle, i.e. pear shape
3. Inactivity
4. Age over 45 years old
5. History of gestational diabetes
6. Race: Minorities have increased risk of developing diabetes
7. Metabolic syndrome
8. High blood pressure
9. High cholesterol

How do I know if I have diabetes?

Your doctor can order a simple blood test to check if your blood glucose levels are elevated. If the test results are abnormal your doctor can refer you for further testing.

How is Diabetes Treated?

First line treatment: EXERCISE and maintain a healthy diet and weight.

Medications: There are a variety of oral medications that your doctor can prescribe. They each work in different ways. For example, Metformin (also known as Glucophage), reduces the amount of glucose the liver releases into the bloodstream between meals. EVERY medication has side effects. (ie, Amaryl can cause hypoglycemia). Therefore, it is important to take your medications as prescribed by your doctor! For those who use insulin there are a variety of different types ranging from short acting to long acting. Speak with your doctor to find out the best regimen for you.

Treatment Goals: The greatest goal of treatment is to control blood glucose levels (glycemic control).

Tight glycemic control prevents the complications of diabetes:

1. Kidney and eye disease can be reduced by 50%
2. Heart disease can be prevented
3. High blood pressure can be reduced



Goals of blood glucose levels:

Follow up with your doctor but general guidelines are:

Blood sugar levels

Before meals:	90-130mg/dL
1-2hrs after meals	<180mg/dL
Before bedtime	110-150mg/dL

Hemoglobin A1c Level Tests are simple blood tests a doctor can perform to assess Glycemic control over a three month period.

Nutrition:

1. There is no specific diabetic diet
2. Eat regularly and most importantly, in moderation
3. Your diet will depend on any additional medical conditions and your weight

Exercise/ Activity:

1. Be cautious: Before initiating any exercise regimen speak with you doctor
2. Exercise lowers blood glucose levels by converting sugars into fuel and energy
3. Exercise also reduces insulin resistance making cells more responsive to insulin
4. If your starting glucose is greater than 300 mg/dL, consult with your doctor before exercising, as it can increase your blood glucose
5. Check your sugar level before and after workouts to understand its affects on your body

Complications of Diabetes:

1. Heart disease and stroke (accounts for 65% of death in people with diabetes)
2. High blood pressure
3. Blindness (diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in adults 20-74)
4. Kidney Disease



5. Neuropathy (nerve damage) - of the feet, gastrointestinal tract and peripheral nerves
6. Amputations
7. Dental Disease
8. Birth Defects (spontaneous abortion and babies weighing more than 10 pounds at birth)
9. Sexual Dysfunction
10. Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA) and Hyperosmolar Coma

Dr. V's Top 10 Tips for Diabetics:

1. Know your HgBA1c; GOAL is less than 7
2. Get your blood pressure and weight checked at every doctor's visit
3. Have you lipid panel checked
4. Know your serum creatinine and have your urine checked for protein
5. Visit the dentist twice a year and FLOSS regularly
6. Get your eyes checked yearly; DON'T wait for PROBLEMS
7. Check your feet daily for wounds, cuts, sores
8. DON'T SMOKE and only drink alcohol in moderation and never on an empty stomach!
9. Avoid low-carb items-they may be high in sugar; schedule a meeting with a nutritionist to develop a healthy diet plan
10. Achieve a healthy weight and exercise; TALK to your doctor before beginning a workout regimen

****Dr.V has compiled facts and info below from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and National Institute of Health (NIH) to educate you about diabetes.**