



## DIABETES MELLITUS FACTS

### WHAT IS DIABETES MELLITUS?

Diabetes mellitus (hyperglycemia) is often referred to as sugar diabetes or simply "sugar." It is a chronic condition of **high blood sugar**. People with diabetes cannot properly store and use food for energy. The body uses **glucose** (a simple sugar) as a major source of energy. Glucose comes from foods like breads, cereals, pasta, rice, potatoes, fruits and some vegetables. The level of glucose in your blood is controlled by a hormone called **insulin** (produced in the pancreas). The blood level of glucose is normally less than 110 mg/dl. People who have diabetes cannot regulate the glucose in their blood with insulin. Even after fasting (not eating or drinking for eight hours), their glucose level will be above 126 mg/dl. People who have diabetes either **cannot produce enough insulin** or they are **not able to use the insulin** that their body makes.

### TYPES OF DIABETES MELLITUS

**Type 1 diabetes** has been called insulin-dependent diabetes or juvenile diabetes. In this type of diabetes, the body cannot produce the insulin it needs to control glucose. Type 1 diabetes develops very quickly over a few days or weeks. Most people develop Type 1 diabetes **before the age of 25**. Type 1 happens equally in men and woman. It occurs most often in Caucasians. Type 1 diabetes is not caused by eating too much sugar and cannot be prevented.

**Type 2 diabetes** has been called non-insulin dependent diabetes or adult onset diabetes. People with Type 2 diabetes don't make enough insulin or they can't use the insulin that their body makes. Type 2 is the most common type of diabetes. It usually appears in **older adults** who are overweight and do not exercise enough. It is most common in women, blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans. There are many causes of Type 2 diabetes and many ways to prevent it.

**Other specific types of diabetes** happen with certain health conditions. People with genetic defects that affect insulin production develop **youth onset diabetes**. Diabetes also occurs in people who have pancreatitis or cystic fibrosis, people who's growth hormones are out of balance (acromegaly or gigantism), and people with health problems caused by drugs, chemicals or infections. **Gestational diabetes** appears in women during pregnancy.

**Diabetes mellitus is the leading cause of blindness, impotence, kidney failure, and amputations and is a major risk factor for heart disease.**

### SYMPTOMS

- Extreme thirst
- Frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss
- Blurry vision that changes
- Unusual tiredness or drowsiness
- Numbness in hands or feet
- Frequent skin, gum or bladder infections

### RISK FACTORS

- Over age 45
- Overweight or obese
- No regular exercise
- Parent or sibling has diabetes
- Women who have had a baby weighing over nine pounds
- Gestational diabetes during pregnancy
- Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian or Pacific Island families are at the greatest risk

### PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Eat a healthy diet
- Keep your weight under control
- Exercise regularly

### COMPLICATIONS

High blood sugar levels for long periods of time can cause damage to the eyes, kidneys, nerves, heart and blood vessels. Extreme cases may lead to amputation of fingers, toes and limbs.

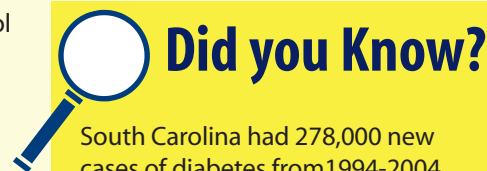
### DIAGNOSIS

Diabetes is tested with fasting blood sugar. Blood is drawn (usually by a finger prick) after not eating or drinking for eight hours. Test results between 110 and 125 mean you may have a high risk for diabetes and should be retested in one year.

People who are diagnosed with diabetes can monitor their blood sugar with a glucose monitor. This tests blood sugar with a finger prick. Your doctor can monitor your blood sugar control by checking your hemoglobin levels every few months to determine how controlled your blood sugars have been.

### TREATMENT

- Insulin by injection, pump or pill
- Weight loss and exercise
- Pancreatic transplant
- Education
- Nutrition



### Did you Know?

South Carolina had 278,000 new cases of diabetes from 1994-2004.

- Centers for Disease Control

Diabetes mellitus is the sixth leading cause of death in South Carolina.