

Diabetes

All the food we eat is used by our body to produce energy. One of the three kinds of food that our body uses is sugar. If we are healthy, then the sugar in the food we eat is changed into energy to help us do things. When you have diabetes, your body has a problem changing that sugar into energy, and the sugar builds up in your blood.



There are different types of diabetes.

When babies or children have this disease, they have type 1 diabetes and must take insulin injections every day and be careful about what they eat. This is the rarest kind of diabetes.



Pregnant women can get a temporary kind of diabetes that usually stops when the baby is born. This is called gestational diabetes. If this kind of diabetes is not treated by a doctor, it can harm the baby before it is born.



Most people with diabetes have type 2, which can happen to adults when they get older. People are more likely to get this disease if they don't get physical exercise and they are fat.



People with family members that have type 2 diabetes are also at higher risk of getting the disease. African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans and some Asian Americans are also at higher risk. This means they get diabetes more often than people from other ethnic backgrounds.



The symptoms of diabetes can be:

- Urinating often
- Being very thirsty
- Losing weight without trying
- Feeling very hungry most of the time

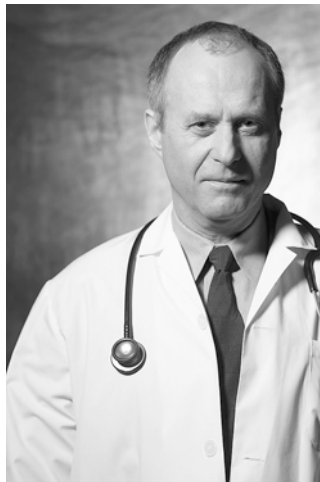


Having blurry eye sight
Losing feeling or having tingling in your feet
Having dry, itchy skin
Having sores that heal slowly
Feeling very tired



A person with diabetes might have some or none of these symptoms.

If you do have some of these symptoms, ask your doctor to test you for diabetes. To check this, your doctor will test the level of glucose (sugar) in your blood.



If you find out that you have diabetes, you may need to check your blood sugar every day with a glucose meter.



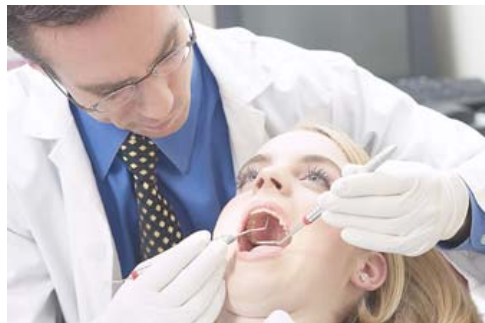
Because the level of sugar in your blood is too high, you might have to take medicine every day to keep it lower. Getting exercise and losing weight will also lower your blood sugar and help you to feel better.



If diabetes is not treated and you don't keep your blood sugar low, you can have serious health problems, like heart disease, or kidney disease. High blood sugar can cause eye problems and you can lose your sight.



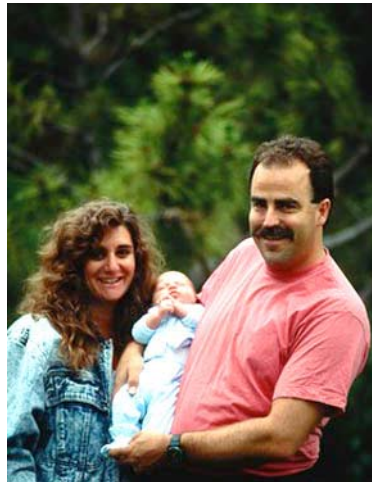
It also affects mouth, teeth and gums. Brush your teeth every day and get them checked regularly.



You may also have problems with sores on your feet. If this problem is not treated, your toe, foot or even your leg might have to be cut off (amputated).



Ask your doctor to send you to people that can show you how to take care of yourself. They will explain how to take your medicine, test your blood sugar, and eat right. They can show your whole family how to help you with your diabetes and how to stay healthy themselves.



Diabetes is a serious condition, but you can feel better and live a long and healthy life if you keep your blood sugar low and follow your doctor's advice.

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