

DIABETES: THE SILENT DISEASE

Diabetes is often called the silent disease because many people who have it show little or no symptoms. While diabetes may not make you feel sick, it's still a serious disease. If it's not properly managed, diabetes can cause:

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| Vision problems, including blindness | Heart attacks and strokes |
| Foot and leg problems | Frequent hospitalizations |
| Kidney disease | Problems with sexual functions |

AM I AT RISK FOR DIABETES?

Some people run a higher risk of getting diabetes than others. A simple blood test can tell you whether you have the disease. You should get tested for diabetes if you:

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| Are 45 years of age or older and overweight. | Have a parent or brother or sister with diabetes. |
| Are Native American, Hispanic, or African-American descent. | Have high blood pressure or high cholesterol. |

DIABETES WARNING SIGNS

People with diabetes often show no outward symptoms of the disease; however, you should get tested if you have any of the following symptoms:

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| Blurred vision | Frequent urination |
| Drowsiness | Excessive thirst |
| Frequent skin infections or cuts that are slow to heal | |

WHAT IF I HAVE DIABETES?

If you have diabetes, you can drastically reduce your risk of health problems by teaming up with your doctor to manage your diabetes and stay healthy. Diabetes is a serious disease, but it doesn't have to get in the way of an active life. Here are some things you and your doctor can do.

AT HOME

Exercise regularly. Most people who have diabetes can benefit from regular physical activity three or more times per week. Your doctor can help you develop an exercise program that's right for you.

Develop a healthy eating plan and stick to it. You may want to talk to a registered dietitian to find the right plan.

Examine your feet every day, checking for sores, calluses, red spots, cuts, swelling and blisters.

Don't smoke. Smoking worsens diabetes-related circulatory problems and further increases your risk of heart disease and stroke. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor or call the Michigan Department of Community Health at 1-800-537-5666 and ask for a free Quit Kit.

Monitor your blood pressure with the help of your doctor.

Monitor your blood sugar. Ask your doctor how often you should test your blood sugar.

AT YOUR DOCTOR'S OFFICE:

Ask for a referral to a certified diabetes self-management education program.

Get a thorough physical exam including blood sugar, weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride checks, a urine sample, and a hemoglobin A1c test. Then, discuss the results with your doctor.

Get a foot exam every time you visit your doctor.

Get a flu shot every fall.

Get a referral for a dilated eye exam once per year.

Get pneumococcal immunization one time in your life (your doctor will tell you if you need it more than once).

Once you get used to managing your diabetes, you may be surprised how easy it is to keep it under control. Most importantly, managing the disease properly will help you lead a longer, healthier and fuller life! For more specific information about managing diabetes, ask your doctor.

You can also find more information online at www.michigan.gov/mdch. Click on Physical Health and Prevention the Prevention to find Diabetes.