

Controlling your risk: Why diabetes is a problem!

Having diabetes is a risk for ...

- new blindness in people 20 to 74 years old. Every year up to 24,000 adults lose their sight because of diabetes.
- end-stage kidney (renal) disease. Kidney dialysis or kidney transplant are the only treatments.
- nerve (neuropathy) disease. 60 to 70% of diabetics have some loss of sensation in their feet and legs.
- decreased blood flow to the legs and feet (peripheral vascular disease: PAD). PAD can mean the loss (amputation) of toes, foot or limb. Risks of amputation are 15 to 40 times higher in a diabetic.
- heart disease (coronary artery disease: CAD) or stroke (cerebrovascular disease: CVD). A diabetic is 2 to 4 times more likely to have these diseases.



Risks for diabetes include

- age older than 45
- having a family history of diabetes
- being overweight or obese
- not exercising regularly
- being African American, Asian or a Pacific Islander, Latino, or Native American.
- being a women and having had a baby that weighed more than 9 pounds at birth or having had high blood glucose during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)

You can decrease your risk of diabetes by

- eating a heart healthy diet.
- exercising regularly.
- losing weight if you are overweight or obese.
- avoiding tobacco and tobacco smoke.

There are warning signs of diabetes.

You may ...

- be thirsty all the time.
- be more tired than usual.
- be hungry all the time.
- be sick more often or longer than usual.
- lose weight without trying.
- have a problem seeing.
- go to the bathroom more often to urinate.
- have sores that do not heal.
- have skin, bladder, or mouth infections often.

Call your doctor if you have any symptom.

The American Diabetes Association

recommends checking blood glucose at least every 3 years for most adults over age 45, sooner if you have risk factors for diabetes. You should be checked at an earlier age or more often if you have risk factors.

