Diabetes and Your Health

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Approximately 29.1 million people (over 9.3 percent of the population) in the U.S. have diabetes. Another 86 million people have pre-diabetes, meaning that their blood glucose levels are higher than normal. It is estimated that 1 in 10 people will develop diabetes in their lifetime.

In 2010, diabetes was the seventh leading cause of death in Ohio, but was thought to be underreported on death certificates. It is also very costly. In 2013, it cost the U.S. $245 billion: $176 billion in direct medical costs and $69 billion in indirect costs including loss of work, disability and premature mortality.

Almost everyone knows someone whose life is affected by diabetes. When it’s not controlled, diabetes may lead to serious complications including heart disease, stroke, eye disease or kidney damage. Over half of the people in the U.S. on dialysis have diabetes. Other complications are nerve damage and circulation problems, most common in the feet and hands. These complications may lead to lower limb amputations.

Diabetes Definitions

To understand diabetes, it’s important to know some basic definitions. Diabetes is a chronic disease that has no cure; however, there are ways to manage it.

• Diabetes: A disease where your body doesn’t produce enough insulin or can’t use its insulin. Insulin is produced in the pancreas and helps glucose (a sugar) get from the bloodstream into cells.

• Type 1 Diabetes: The body makes little or no insulin. People with Type 1 diabetes take insulin regularly. One in 10 people with diabetes has Type 1, and it is usually diagnosed as a child or young adult. For more information, visit the American Diabetes Association at diabetes.org.

• Type 2 Diabetes: The body doesn’t make enough insulin or the cells ignore it. Nine in 10 people with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes, and learn that they have the disease as an adult.

Risk Factors for Diabetes

• People over the age of 40
• People who are overweight
• People who are sedentary
• People who have a family history of diabetes

If you have an increased risk for diabetes, you should see a doctor and be tested for diabetes.

Warning Signs of Type 2 Diabetes

• Excessive thirst
• Frequent urination
• Extreme hunger
• Weight loss
• Irritability
• Weakness, fatigue, sleepiness
• Nausea and vomiting
• Recurring wounds that do not heal
• Blurred vision
• Tingling in hands or feet
• Itching

It is important to know that some people with Type 2 diabetes don’t have any symptoms.

Controlling Diabetes

If your doctor tells you that you have diabetes, there are several things you can do to help keep it under control. They include medications, blood testing, healthy nutrition and physical activity.

• Medication: Your doctor may recommend a medication to help control your diabetes.

• Blood Testing: Frequent blood-sugar testing will help check your glucose level. Some people test their glucose several times a day.

• Healthy Eating: Talk with a registered dietitian or
certified diabetes educator to determine a healthy diet. Use the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the USDA’s MyPlate, food exchange lists or carbohydrate-counting to help you. Dining with Diabetes is a series of classes offered by many OSU Extension Offices and community health partners. These classes include information on healthy eating, meal planning and preparation, and health information.

- Physical Activity: Moderate or intensive physical activity can help manage weight and blood-glucose levels. Talk with your health care provider and choose an activity that you enjoy and that will help you manage your weight and blood-glucose levels. Thirty minutes of moderate physical activity (i.e., walking), five or more times a week, is generally recommended. However, the timing, duration and intensity of physical activity sessions should be discussed with a health care provider.

For Additional Information, Contact:

- Your local health care provider
- American Diabetes Association
  Attn: National Call Center
  1701 North Beauregard Street
  Alexandria, VA 22311
  1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)
  diabetes.org
- National Diabetes Education Program
  One Diabetes Way
  Bethesda, MD 20814-9692
  301-496-3583
  ndep.nih.gov

References


