

Talk to your doctor or clinic if you have:

- extreme thirst
- increased hunger
- blurry vision
- a frequent need to urinate
- unexplained weight loss
- slow healing of wounds
- numb feet and hands
- low energy

Your weight matters

Losing extra pounds now may keep you from getting diabetes or slow down its progress. Even losing 10 or 20 pounds can make a difference. Some people with type 2 diabetes can even stop taking medication after losing extra weight. Being active can help you control your weight and help your body use insulin better.

What can I do if I have diabetes?

Take charge. Make healthy changes.

Not everyone can prevent type 2 diabetes. But once you have it, you can keep your diabetes under control by taking charge of your health. Make changes in your lifestyle such as what foods you eat, how much exercise you get and not smoking. And if medications are prescribed, take them as directed.

Work with your doctor, diabetes educators and dietitians to control your high blood sugar levels. Your doctor may order the following tests for you. You may have these tests more or less often, depending on your risk factors:

- a hemoglobin HbA1c blood test every 3 to 6 months to check your average blood sugar levels
- a dilated eye exam every year to check for diabetic eye disease
- a urine test every year to check for kidney disease
- a cholesterol test every year, including your low density lipoprotein (LDL) level to monitor your heart disease risk

Know your numbers!

Your HbA1c should be less than 7 percent. Your LDL cholesterol should be less than 100 mg/dL. Your blood pressure should be under 130/80.

Live well in these ways

You can lower your risk of complications from diabetes and stay your healthiest by following these steps:

- Eat low-fat, fiber-rich foods
- Be active
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Check your feet often for cuts, blisters, red spots or swelling
- Control your blood pressure and cholesterol levels

- Get a flu shot each year
- Get a one-time pneumonia shot
- Don't smoke
- Ask your doctor if you should take an aspirin every day

Are you at risk for diabetes?

Maybe you don't have diabetes, but others in your family do. Knowing the risk factors and symptoms can help you watch out for this disease.

- Do you have a parent, brother or sister with diabetes?
- Is your family background Alaska Native, American Indian, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American or Pacific Islander?
- Are you overweight or obese?
- Are you over age 45?
- Do you exercise fewer than 3 times a week?
- Is your blood pressure 140/90 mm Hg or higher, or have you been told you have high blood pressure?
- Have you been told your cholesterol levels are not normal?
- Do you have a history of heart disease?
- Have you had gestational diabetes or given birth to a baby that weighed more than 9 pounds?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, talk to your doctor about your risk factors for diabetes.