Diabetes: Are you at risk?

Having diabetes means there’s too much glucose, or sugar, in your blood. Many of the risk factors for diabetes can be controlled by a healthy lifestyle—things like eating healthy, losing weight and exercising. If you know your risks, you can make changes that may help prevent diabetes.

What is diabetes?
Diabetes is a condition in which blood glucose levels are too high because of the body’s inability to make enough insulin or use insulin properly.

There are two key players:
• Glucose (sugar) is fuel for the body’s cells
• Insulin takes glucose from the blood to the cells

In people with diabetes, the body makes little to no insulin, and/or the body prevents the cells from using the insulin it makes (insulin resistance). As a result, glucose cannot get into the cells, so it stays in the blood, causing high blood glucose (hyperglycemia).

Sugar in foods can be categorized in two ways: naturally occurring or added
• Naturally occurring sugars are found naturally in foods or drinks, like fruits or milk.
• Added sugars are sweeteners that have been added to foods or drinks during processing or preparation.

There are two main types of diabetes
• Type 1 diabetes. The pancreas does not produce insulin, which causes a buildup of glucose (sugar) in your bloodstream.
• Type 2 diabetes. The pancreas still makes insulin, but the insulin doesn’t do its job as it should. Glucose just hangs around and builds up in the blood. Initially, the pancreas makes even more insulin to get glucose to go into the cells, but eventually gets worn out from working so hard and doesn’t produce as much insulin.

Prediabetes is when a person’s blood sugar level is higher than normal, but not high enough to constitute a diabetes diagnosis. This puts a person at a greater risk of developing Type 2 diabetes in the future.

Warning signs of diabetes
Talk to your healthcare provider if you experience any of the following:
• Frequent urination
• Being unusually thirsty or hungry
• Being unusually tired or fatigued
• Feeling grumpy regularly
• Blurry vision
• Cuts and bruises that are slow to heal
• Tingling, pain or numbness in the hands/feet
• Unexplained weight changes
Diabetes: Are you at risk?

How is diabetes diagnosed?

There are several types of tests used to screen for diabetes:

- **Fasting plasma glucose (FPG) test.** This measures your blood glucose level at a single point in time. It’s usually done in the morning, after fasting for at least eight hours.

- **A1c test.** This test provides your average levels of blood glucose over the past three months. The results are reported as a percentage; the higher the percentage, the higher your average blood glucose levels.

- **Oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT).** This two-hour test measures your blood glucose levels before and two hours after drinking a special drink. It tells your healthcare provider how well your body processes glucose.

- **Random plasma glucose test.** This test checks your blood glucose level at any time of day. It is most often used when a person has severe diabetes symptoms.³

Questions for my doctor

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
**Diabetes: Are you at risk?**

Are you at risk?

Take the diabetes risk assessment to determine your risk. Use the results of this assessment to discuss your risk of diabetes with your healthcare provider. Use the boxes on the right to write your score for each question, and then add up your total score at the end.⁴

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your diabetes risk assessment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. What is your age?                                                                         | • Less than 40 years (0 points)  
• 40–49 years (1 point)  
• 50–59 years (2 points)  
• 60 years or older (3 points)                                                                 |
| 2. Are you a man or a woman?                                                                 | • Man (1 point)  
• Woman (0 points)                                                                 |
| 3. If you're a woman, do you have a history of gestational diabetes or polycystic ovary syndrome? | • Yes (1 point)  
• No (0 points)  
• N/A (0 points)                                                                 |
| 4. Do you have a family history of diabetes (for example, your mother, father, sister or brother)? | • Yes (1 point)  
• No (0 points)                                                                 |
| 5. Have you ever been diagnosed with high blood pressure?                                     | • Yes (1 point)  
• No (0 points)                                                                 |
| 6. Are you physically active (for example, do you get 150 minutes of exercise each week)?   | • Yes (0 points)  
• No (1 point)                                                                 |
| 7. Are you overweight, obese or extremely obese (use the chart on the next page to help determine which category you fit into)? | • Normal weight (0 points)  
• Overweight (1 point)  
• Obese (2 points)  
• Extremely obese (3 points)                                                               |
| 8. What race or ethnicity best describes you?                                                | • White/Caucasian (0 points)  
• American-Indian or Alaska Native (1 point)  
• Asian-American (1 point)  
• Black or African-American (1 point)  
• Hispanic or Latino (1 point)  
• Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (1 point)  
• Other (0 points)                                                                 |

**Your total score**
Diabetes: Are you at risk?

Diabetes risk assessment results
If your total score was greater than or equal to 5, you are at an increased risk for Type 2 diabetes.¹ If you are at high risk, see your healthcare provider for a simple blood test to check for diabetes.

Some questions you may want to ask include:
• Should I get a diabetes screening test?
• What different tests are available?
• What are the pros and cons of each test?
• What can I do to lower my risk for diabetes?
• What are the symptoms of diabetes?
• If I am diagnosed with diabetes, what are my treatment options?

Schedule your screening today!
If you think you’re at risk for diabetes, talk to your healthcare provider about being screened as soon as possible. It’s important to get the treatment you need to prevent or delay complications.

References
¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/media/presskits/aahd/diabetes.pdf
²American Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/symptoms/
³American Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/diagnosis/
⁴American Diabetes Association
⁵Adapted from Bang et al, Ann Intern Med 151:775-783, 2009. Original algorithm was validated without gestational diabetes as part of the model.

This is for informational purposes only and does not replace treatment or advice from a healthcare professional. If you have questions, please talk with your doctor. Talk to your doctor before beginning an exercise program or making any changes to your diet.