

If you have diabetes, the following services are available to you as part of Indian Health Care's diabetes treatment program:

- **Diabetes check-ups every 3 months:** Please call 588-1900 to make a doctor's appointment.
- **Diabetes Program Coordinator:** Please call 382-1220 for diabetes education or to discuss any concerns that you have.
- **Foot care:** Please call 588-1900 for an appointment at the foot clinic with the Physician Assistant, who is a Certified Diabetes Foot Specialist.
- **Nutritionist/Dietitian:** Karen Rodgers, RD/LD, CDE - 382-1273; Gabrielle Ketter, RD/LD - 382-1259; or Erica Dean, RD/LD, Healthy Hearts program - 588-1900 ext. 2235 to schedule an appointment with the Dietitian.
- **Optometrist:** Please call 382-1263 to schedule an appointment.
- **Dentist:** Please call 382-1257 to schedule an appointment.
- **Pharmacy Refills:** Please call the pharmacy refill line number at 382-1270. Please call 24 to 48 hours in advance so that your prescriptions will be ready for you.



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Diabetes

THE FACTS:
*What every
American
Indian needs
to know*



INDIAN HEALTH CARE
RESOURCE CENTER OF TULSA

Main Clinic

550 S. Peoria, Tulsa, OK 74120
(918) 588-1900 www.ihcrc.org

Satellite Office: 1628 S. Main
(918) 382-1281

Diabetes is a common disease that affects people throughout the world.

Unfortunately, American Indians, African Americans, Latinos and Hispanics may be more likely to become diabetic.



In some American Indian tribes, 25% to 50% of adults over 40 have diabetes. Diabetes often runs in families, but that doesn't mean that everyone in the family will have diabetes.

Although diabetes is a disease, you don't "catch" it like a cold, and taking medicine cannot cure it. But diabetes can be controlled, so that you can still feel good and lead an active life.

The person who has the most power to control diabetes is YOU!

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease that keeps your body from using food properly. Your body needs glucose to live – it's your source of energy. Glucose comes from carbohydrates. It is found in milk, sweets, fruits, vegetables, and in starchy foods like bread, potatoes and pasta.

To use glucose for energy, your body needs insulin to get glucose into your cells. If you have Type 1 diabetes, your pancreas does not make insulin, so you must take insulin shots. However, 90% to 95% of people with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes. The main problem in Type 2 diabetes is insulin resistance: cells won't let all the insulin in. When insulin can't get into the cells, neither can glucose. It stays in the blood and causes high blood sugar.



Two types of Diabetes

There are two types of diabetes. Most people have Type 2 diabetes. This is also called adult-onset diabetes, because it usually occurs in adults over 40 years old. Type 2 diabetes is becoming more common, even in childhood, because more people are overweight. People with Type 1 diabetes are usually children or young adults. This type of diabetes is much rarer. People with Type 1 diabetes must take insulin.

How does Diabetes affect your body?

Untreated diabetes results in high levels of sugar in the blood and can cause heart attacks, strokes, blindness, kidney failure, and amputations. These complications are more likely if you have high blood pressure along with diabetes.

How likely am I to get Diabetes?

You are at higher risk for diabetes:

- If you have a parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- If you are overweight
- If you don't get at least 30 minutes of moderately strenuous exercise most days of the week
- If you are American Indian, African American, or Hispanic
- If you are over 40
- If you had diabetes during pregnancy or if you have had a baby that weighed over 9 pounds
- If your mother had diabetes when she was pregnant with you
- If you have high blood pressure (at or above 140/90)



Can Diabetes be prevented?

Yes. Before 1940, diabetes was rare among Indian people. Today it is very common because so many people are overweight and don't exercise. Even children are getting Type 2 diabetes because so many children are overweight.

In the old days, Indian people were very active and followed a traditional diet. Today, too many of us live on fast food and junk food. Instead of leading an active lifestyle, we have become couch potatoes who get our "exercise" by running to the fridge during commercials!

We can prevent diabetes if we return to a more active lifestyle and eat healthy foods. One of the best ways to prevent diabetes is to maintain a healthy weight and exercise regularly.

In cases when diabetes can't be prevented, it can be managed so that people with diabetes can enjoy a long and nearly normal, healthy life.



What are the symptoms of Diabetes?

About a third of the people who have diabetes don't know they have it. Not everybody who has diabetes has exactly the same symptoms. It's possible that you may have diabetes and not know it, if you have some of these symptoms:

- Having to urinate all the time
- Being thirsty or hungry all the time
- Losing weight fast, for no apparent reason
- Feeling tired, weak or exhausted all the time
- Having blurred vision
- Slow healing of cuts and scratches or frequent skin infections
- Feeling drowsy all the time
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Itchiness or dry skin
- No symptoms at all – many people who have diabetes, don't even know they have it.

How can I find out if I have Diabetes?

Call our clinic and make an appointment for a glucose test. A fingerstick blood test is done to screen for diabetes in everyone 3 years and older. If your blood sugar is high, another blood sample will be taken for further testing.



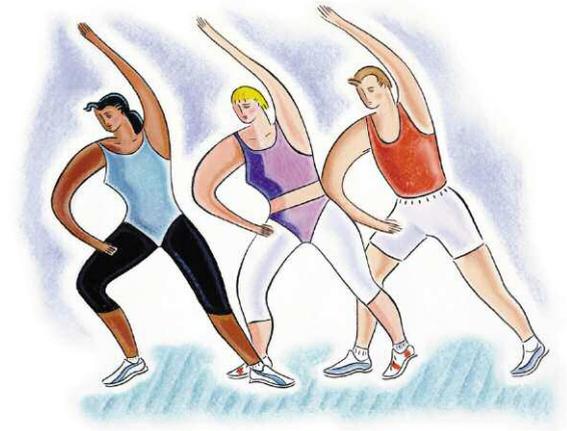
How often should I be tested for Diabetes?

- Now, if you have symptoms of diabetes
- Once a year, if you have a parent, brother, or sister who has diabetes
- Every 3 years, if you don't have a parent, brother, or sister who has diabetes

If you find out that you have diabetes, don't panic! At Indian Health Care, you have a team of health professionals ready to help you manage your diabetes. The diabetes team consists of your doctor, diabetes coordinator, dietitian, nurse educator, certified diabetes foot specialist and the pharmacist. But, the most important member of the diabetes team is YOU! Together with you, we will develop a plan to help you keep your blood sugar under control.

What can be done to control Diabetes?

Although there is no cure for diabetes, it can be controlled. People with diabetes can live a more active lifestyle and eat right as ways to help prevent diabetes from becoming more severe or dangerous.



The main goal of diabetes control techniques is to keep your blood sugar level within the normal range by:

- Eating a low-fat, healthy diet
- Eating less food
- Relaxing and reducing stress
- Regular exercise, such as walking for 30 minutes nearly every day.
- Taking pills or insulin, as prescribed

Living with Diabetes

If you find out that you have diabetes, an individual plan will be developed to help you plan your meals and to get regular exercise. You will be given a glucometer to routinely test your blood sugar. Testing your blood sugar is very important - it will help our clinic staff work with you to manage your diabetes.



If your doctor prescribes diabetes pills for your diabetes, you will need to take them every day. If you also have high blood pressure, the doctor may also prescribe a blood pressure lowering medicine that you will need to take every day. If insulin is prescribed, you will be trained on how to give yourself injections.

Regardless of what type of diabetes medications prescribed by your doctor, it is important that you get your prescriptions refilled so that you don't run out of medications.

In addition to these measures to help your body control your blood sugar, there are a number of general body care steps that people with diabetes need to pay extra attention to due to increased risks. People with diabetes need to take extra good care of their feet and wear well-fitting shoes to maintain good blood circulation and to prevent sores and possible infections.

They also need to get regular dental and eye care.

Women who are pregnant will have their diabetes closely monitored during their pregnancy.



Remember, *Diabetes is a serious disease.*

Untreated and unmanaged diabetes can be deadly. The risks of diabetes become worse if you also have high blood pressure. Untreated diabetes results in high levels of sugar in the blood and can cause heart attacks, strokes, blindness, kidney failure, and amputations.