

# Are You at Risk for Diabetes?

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Over the past several years there has been a great increase in type II diabetes diagnosis. Not many years ago a diagnosis of type II diabetes was rare in people age 40 or younger. The Center for Disease Control reported a 33% increase in diabetes type II (DM II) from 1990 through 1998. The number of people age 30-39 diagnosed with diabetes rose 76%, while those in their 40's rose 40%. Even some people in their 20's have been diagnosed with this disease. Are you at risk? Do you know the risk factors? If you carry your weight in your chest, and stomach you are at higher risk than someone who carries extra weight in the hips and buttocks. If you are obese your chances of getting this disease are greater than those individuals who are at their target weight. Also, individuals who are African-American, Hispanic or American Indian have a higher risk of developing the disease. Researchers have also found the disease may have a genetic link. The warning signs are increased urinary frequency, excess thirst and/or fatigue, dry skin, sores and bruises that heal slowly, and increased frequency of infection.

What is diabetes? DM II is a progressive disease (if left untreated) in which the body doesn't produce enough insulin, is resistant to it or both. Insulin is a hormone responsible for the storage of blood sugar. If insulin is not in the body and/or the body does not respond to it, sugar builds up in the blood and eventually spills over into the urine. Upsetting the blood-sugar balance can lead to infection, poor wound healing, kidney damage, blindness, amputations, and accelerated cardiovascular disease.

There are two types of diabetes: juvenile and adult onset. People cannot control their risk of developing juvenile diabetes. The risk of developing adult onset diabetes increases if the individual has a typical American lifestyle; overweight and sedentary. It can often be prevented, delayed, or managed with a healthy, active lifestyle. Treatment for adult diabetes is generally a low fat diet coupled with exercise.

So to prevent its onset we recommend a fitness walking program and healthy food choices. Begin walking three times per week for ten minutes each time. Progress each week until you are walking five times per week, 30 minutes at a time. Make sure your diet is made up of no more than 30% fat. See your doctor before beginning an exercise program and talk to a registered dietitian or nutritionist if you are unsure how to calculate the amount of fat in your diet.