

## DIABETES EARLY SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS

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### **What is diabetes? What are the types of diabetes?**

Diabetes is a metabolic disorder that occurs when your blood sugar (glucose), is too high (hyperglycemia). Glucose is what the body uses for energy, and the pancreas produces a hormone called insulin that helps convert the glucose from the food you eat into energy. When the body either does not produce enough insulin, does not produce any at all, or your body becomes resistant to the insulin, the glucose does not reach your cells to be used for energy. This results in the health condition termed diabetes.

There are two main types of diabetes, type 1 and type 2.

- Type 1 diabetes, formerly called juvenile diabetes, because it usually is diagnosed during childhood. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition in which the body does not produce insulin because the body's immune system attacks insulin-producing cells from the pancreas called beta cells. Type 1 diabetes is treated by using insulin.
- Type 2 diabetes is a condition in which cells cannot use blood sugar (glucose) efficiently for energy. This occurs when blood sugar levels get too high over time, and the cells become insensitive or resistant to insulin (termed insulin resistance). There are multiple medications used to treat type 2 diabetes.

### **What warning signs and symptoms of diabetes are the same in men and women?**

There are diabetes warning signs and symptoms that both women and men have in common, for example:

- Excessive thirst and hunger
- Frequent urination (from urinary tract infections or kidney problems)
- Weight loss or gain
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing wounds
- Nausea
- Skin infections
- Darkening of skin in areas of body creases (acanthosis nigricans)
- Breath odor that is fruity, sweet, or an acetone odor
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet

### **What is prediabetes (pre-diabetes)?**

Prediabetes is a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but a person does not yet have diabetes. Prediabetes and high blood glucose levels are a risk factor for developing diabetes, heart disease, and other health problems. Other warning signs prediabetes may include increased urination, feeling you need to urinate more often, and/or increased thirst.

### **What warning signs and symptoms of diabetes are unique to men?**

Signs and symptoms of diabetes unique to men include:

- Erectile dysfunction (ED, impotence)
- Retrograde ejaculation
- Low testosterone (low-T)
- Decreased sex drive (decreased libido) and sexual dysfunction

### **What are risk factors for diabetes in men?**

Gender is a risk factor for diabetes, and men are at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes than women.

Other risk factors for developing diabetes for both men and women include:

- Family history: first degree relative with diabetes
- Ethnicity: increased risk for Asians, Hispanics, and African Americans
- Obesity
- Fat distribution: more fat around the middle
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Sedentary lifestyle (lack of exercise and/or not physically active)
- Smoking
- Excess alcohol intake
- Lack of sleep
- Low testosterone in men
- Unhealthy diet with high calorie content containing sugars and lacking beneficial compounds to increase wellness

### **How does diabetes affect men differently than women?**

Men who have type 2 diabetes are twice as likely to have low testosterone (low-T) than men who do not have diabetes. Because of the low levels of the hormone testosterone, men with diabetes can have unhealthy symptoms that are not seen in women with diabetes.

Low testosterone can cause decreased sex drive, depression, lack of energy, and reduced muscle mass. It can also cause male-specific sexual problems and urological problems.

Erectile dysfunction (ED, impotence), or inability to get or maintain an erection, is a common symptom of diabetes in men. Diabetic men experience erectile dysfunction at earlier ages than men who do not have diabetes.

Another diabetes-related sexual dysfunction symptom in men is reduced amounts of ejaculation, or retrograde ejaculation. Retrograde ejaculation is a condition in which the semen goes into the bladder, rather than out of the body through the urethra. Diabetes and damage to the blood vessels causes nerve damage to the muscles that control the bladder and urethra, which results in this problem.

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## **What are the long-term health complications of diabetes?**

Long-term diabetes-related complications include:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Nerve damage and neuropathy (nerve pain)
- Kidney disease
- Retinopathy (nerve damage in the eye and/or blindness)
- Stroke
- Skin infections
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Yeast infections

## **Is there a test to diagnose type 1 and type 2 diabetes?**

Your doctor or other healthcare provider will order urine and blood tests find out if you have diabetes. There are several different types of blood tests used to diagnose diabetes.

- Fasting blood sugar test: After fasting for 12-hours a glucose level is checked in your blood. If it is high, it is indicative of diabetes.
- Hemoglobin A1C test: This test tells your doctor how your average blood glucose level has been over the past 2-3 months.
- Normal ranges for HbA1c are between 4% and 5.6%.
- HbA1c levels that range from 5.7% to 6.4% indicates increased risk of diabetes.
- HbA1c levels higher than 6.5% indicate diabetes, while higher percentages indicate either worsening diabetic disease or poor response to diabetic treatments.
- Random blood sugar test: This is a test of your blood sugar at the moment your blood is drawn, but this number can vary greatly based on when you last ate.
- Oral glucose tolerance test: This test is rarely used in men, but it measures your body's response to a large amount of glucose.

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