

# DIABETES - EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO FOR PREVENTION AND CONTROL

## ***What is Diabetes?***

Diabetes is a group of chronic metabolic diseases characterized by elevated levels of blood glucose (hyperglycemia) resulting from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both.

## ***Types of diabetes?***

There are 3 types of diabetes - Type 1 diabetes; type 2 diabetes; and gestational diabetes.

The majority of people with diabetes are affected by type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is a combination of resistance to insulin action and an inadequate compensatory insulin secretory response. Type 2 diabetes is different from type 1 as it predominantly is caused by lifestyles and aging.

Type 1 diabetes is caused by a deficiency of insulin secretion. Individuals who develop this type of diabetes have an autoimmune disease.

Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that affects pregnant women, usually

appearing in the second or third trimester and goes away after women give birth.

## ***What Risk factors can lead me to get diabetes?***

There are a number of major risk factors for diabetes. Risk factors include - aging as the body's resistance to insulin increases with age. Sedentary life-style with a lot of sitting and desk work with little or no exercise. In addition, a genetic history of diabetes can raise the risk of developing diabetes. Bad diet, eating too much starchy or sugary foods. Make sure that your **Carbohydrates** is only one-third of the food on your plate and two-thirds is vegetable and protein.

## ***How do I know if I have diabetes?***

Symptoms of diabetes include - frequent and excessive urination (polyuria); always feeling thirsty and drinking more water than usual (more than 6-8 cups a day); weight loss with excessive eating or appetite (polyphagia), and blurred vision. Also, getting frequent infections or wounds that do not heal.

## ***What to do if you want to check if you have diabetes?***

If you are an adult over 35 years, check your blood sugar every 6 months. If you are a pregnant woman over the age of 30 who has gained a lot of weight during the

pregnancy, or is pregnant with her 3rd or 4th child please ask your doctor to check your blood sugar at every visit. A normal blood sugar level for random test is between 160 to 180 Ideal and normal Fasting sugar levels are between 80 to 100.

### ***Normal Blood Glucose levels***



### ***What to do if you blood sugar is high?***

If you have a high blood sugar level above 180, two hours after eating on 3 occasions during a doctor's visit, you can still beat diabetes by taking drastic action to prevent the on-set of diabetes. Immediately take the following action: 1. Change your diet to reduce **Carbohydrates** (sugar and starch) to a minimum and switch to protein based food and vegetables. Examples of protein based foods include beans (second class protein), meat and fish. Vegetables are a free food. You can eat as much as you like. Increase exercise to about 4 to 5 times a week for 30 to 40 minutes.

### ***What does not cause diabetes!***

Diabetes is not caused by witchcraft; drinking bad water; by poison; by eating too much eggs; by drinking too much water. These are NOT the causes of diabetes.

### ***Can diabetes be cured?***

If you are pre-diabetic, the process of becoming a diabetic can be reversed and you may not develop diabetes if you take immediate action to change your diet, increase exercise and just change your lifestyle. But if you are diagnosed as having diabetes by your doctor, there is no cure for diabetes. Herbal remedies are used by many people and some people say that some herbs improve sugar control. However, it is important to take your medication if you are diabetic.

### ***How do I control and manage my diabetes?***

People with diabetes must control and manage this disease. How do I do this?

The management of diabetes aims to maintain normal levels of blood glucose and control symptoms. Regular management is encouraged for both types of diabetes. This includes a healthy and balanced diet, exercises and monitoring of blood glucose level. The HbA1c test is used to measure blood glucose levels

among diabetics. A target HbA1c level is usually less than 7.5%.

***How do I check my blood sugar?***

It is very important that you check your blood sugar levels at least every other day, 3 to 4 times a week. You can do so at the Primary Health Center, the Hospital or at home using a Glucometer. A Glucometer should cost about N7,000 without strips. This is an important and necessary investment for monitoring blood sugar levels at home. Invest in one.

***What medicine do most people take if they have diabetes?***

Individuals with type 1 diabetes use regular insulin treatment to keep blood glucose levels normal. While most people use medication to control their type 2 diabetes. There are several different types of tablets for the control of diabetes. Your doctor will prescribe the one that is best suited for you. Most diabetes medication will cost about N25,000 per month. Diabetes is an expensive disease to manage. Please talk to your doctor about the side effects of diabetes.

***What complications do I expect if I cannot control my diabetes?***

When diabetes is not controlled, serious threatening complications arise. Diabetes that is not controlled means that

glucose levels are above normal for a short or long period of time. The longer the time sugar levels are high, the more dangerous it is for the patient.

***What are some of the complications to expect when you let your sugar levels remain high?***

You can get nerve damage, heart disease and other serious problems. Acute, life-threatening consequences of uncontrolled diabetes are hyperglycemia with ketoacidosis or the nonketotic hyperosmolar syndrome. While chronic hyperglycemia of diabetes is associated with long-term damage, dysfunction, and failure of different organs. Long-term complications of diabetes include retinopathy with potential loss of vision; nephropathy leading to renal failure; peripheral neuropathy with risk of foot ulcers, amputations, and Charcot joints; and autonomic neuropathy causing gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and cardiovascular symptoms and sexual dysfunction. Patients with diabetes have an increased incidence of coronary artery disease, peripheral arterial disease, and stroke.

*Information Sheet Produced by Miss. Zuwaria Hashim and distributed courtesy of the development Research and Projects Center (dRPC), 63 B Sultan Road, Nassarawa GRA, Kano State.*