

Diabetes: Symptoms and Prevention

Diabetes occurs when the body is unable to produce or correctly use insulin to convert food into energy. It is a chronic illness. There are two forms of diabetes:

- ▶ **Type 1 diabetes** typically develops during childhood or adolescence. A person with type 1 diabetes must receive injections of insulin because her or his body does not produce it naturally. Symptoms of type 1 diabetes include increased thirst, unusual tiredness, unexplained weight loss, excessive appetite, and increased urination. People with type 1 diabetes need to carefully manage their diets and follow a strict medication regimen.
- ▶ **Type 2 diabetes** is a metabolic disorder. The person continues to produce insulin, but his or her body is unable to use it correctly. While type 2 diabetes often occurs later in life, it can be diagnosed at any age, and research indicates that obesity may contribute to its development. Symptoms of type 2 diabetes include increased thirst and hunger, fatigue, increased urination (especially at night), weight loss, blurred or changing vision, sores that do not heal, and areas of skin with sensory changes (including numbness, tingling, burning, or pain). Type 2 diabetes can often be managed through diet and exercise.

While type 1 diabetes is a genetic condition and cannot be prevented, type 2 is strongly influenced by lifestyle



choices. Some simple steps can greatly decrease the potential for a person of any age to develop type 2 diabetes. These include:

- ▶ Engage in moderate physical activity for 30 minutes a day.
- ▶ If you are overweight, reduce your body weight by 5-10%.
- ▶ Eat a diet that is high in fruits, vegetables, lean meats, and whole grains. Cut back on sugary drinks and foods that are high in fat or calories.

If you are experiencing symptoms of diabetes, it is important to consult with your physician. The earlier diabetes is detected, the more likely its long-term health effects can be prevented.

LifeMatters can provide diet and exercise tips to help you prevent diabetes or manage its impact. Call 24/7/365.

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