



Diabetes: *What You Should Know*



Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that the body needs to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life.

18.2 million people in the United States have diabetes. Unfortunately, nearly one-third of these people (5.2 million) are unaware that they have the disease.

Types of Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes - results from the body's failure to produce insulin. It is estimated that 5 to 10% of Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have this type.

Type 2 diabetes - results from insulin resistance (a condition in which the body fails to properly use insulin), combined with relative insulin deficiency. Ninety to 95% of Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have this type.

Gestational diabetes - a glucose intolerance during pregnancy that affects about 4% of all pregnant women - about 135,000 cases in the United States each year.

Pre-diabetes - occurs when a person's blood-glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a

Diabetes Symptoms

Sometimes diabetes goes undiagnosed because the symptoms are so common. They include:

- **Frequent urination**
- **Excessive thirst**
- **Extreme hunger**
- **Unusual weight loss**
- **Increased fatigue**
- **Irritability**
- **Blurred vision**

If you have one or more of these symptoms, see your doctor right away. Early detection can decrease the chance of developing diabetes!

diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes. There are 41 million Americans who have pre-diabetes.

Diabetes, Heart Disease, and Stroke

Most people with diabetes have additional health problems or risk factors. Two that are very common are high blood pressure and cholesterol. When combined with diabetes, these risk factors add up to big trouble. In fact, more than 65% of people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke. With diabetes, heart attacks occur earlier in life and often result in death. By managing diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol, people with diabetes can

reduce their risk.

Nearly all people with diabetes have abnormal cholesterol levels which contribute to their increased risk for heart attack and stroke. You can reduce risk of high cholesterol, and the chance of developing diabetes, by:

- Choosing foods wisely
- Increasing physical activity
- Taking medications as prescribed by your doctor

National Diabetes Month

In 2003, the President proclaimed **November as National Diabetes Month**. This designation helps draw attention to the seriousness of the disease, and encourages Americans to get tested and treated for diabetes as early as possible.

For more information about diabetes, please visit the American Diabetes Association website, at www.diabetes.org.

BHS Can Help

Business Health Services (BHS), your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), can help you learn more about diabetes. Please call us toll free at **1-800-765-3277** and our Masters level counselors can provide information and resources for you. We are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week - so don't hesitate to call!