



## Branch Hillsdale St. Joseph Community Health Agency Frequently Asked Questions about...

### Diabetes

#### What is Diabetes?

Diabetes means that your blood glucose, or blood sugar, is too high. Your blood always has some glucose in it because your body needs glucose for energy to keep you going. But too much glucose in the blood isn't good for your health.

#### What is Blood Glucose?

Glucose comes from the food you eat and is also made in your liver and muscles. Your blood carries the glucose to all the cells in your body. Insulin is a hormone made by your pancreas. The pancreas releases insulin into the blood which helps the glucose from food get into your cells. If your body doesn't make enough insulin, or if the body cannot use the insulin properly, glucose can't get into your cells and it stays in your blood instead. Your blood glucose level then gets too high, causing pre-diabetes or diabetes. The normal range of glucose in your blood is 70 to 120. Blood glucose goes up after eating, but returns to the normal range 1 or 2 hours later.

#### Can anyone get diabetes? Are there different kinds?

Yes? People can get diabetes at any age. There are two main kinds:

- **Type 1 diabetes**, or insulin-dependent diabetes, is usually first diagnosed in children, teenagers, or young adults. In this form of diabetes the pancreas no longer makes insulin. Treatment for type 1 diabetes includes taking insulin shots or using an insulin pump, making wise food choices, being physically active, taking aspirin daily (for some), and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol.
- **Type 2 diabetes**, formerly called adult-onset diabetes, is the most common form of diabetes. People can develop type 2 diabetes at any age—even during childhood. Being overweight and inactive increases the chances of developing type 2 diabetes. Treatment includes using diabetes medicines, making wise food choices, being physically active, taking aspirin daily, and controlling blood pressure and cholesterol.

#### What is pre-diabetes? Does that mean I am going to get diabetes?

Pre-diabetes is a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal (100-125mg-dl) but are not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes (more than 126mg-dl fasting glucose on at least 2 occasions). People with pre-diabetes are at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes and for heart disease and stroke. The good news is if you have pre-diabetes, you can reduce your risk of getting diabetes. With modest weight loss (perhaps as little as 7-10 lbs) and moderate physical activity (30 min/day, 5 days a week), you can delay or prevent type 2 diabetes and even return to normal glucose levels.

#### What are the signs of diabetes?

The signs of diabetes include:

- being very thirsty
- urinating often- most noticeable at night

- feeling very hungry or tired
- losing weight without trying
- having sores that heal slowly
- having dry, itchy skin
- losing the feeling in your feet or having tingling in your feet
- having blurry eyesight

You may have had one or more of these signs before you found out you had diabetes. Or you may have had no signs at all. A blood test to check your glucose levels will show if you have pre-diabetes or diabetes.

### **Does Diabetes cause other health problems?**

Yes. Taking good care of diabetes will help you avoid health problems diabetes can cause such as:

- Heart disease and stroke.
- Eye disease that can lead to vision problems or even going blind.
- Nerve damage that can cause your hands and feet to feel numb. This can lead to loss of a foot or a leg.
- Kidney problems.
- Gum disease and loss of teeth.

### **Are some people are more likely to get diabetes?**

Yes, some people may have a higher chance of getting diabetes. They should ask their doctor if they need to be tested for diabetes. These include people who:

- are ages 45 and older
- are overweight
- are African American, Hispanic/Latino American, Asian American or Pacific Islander, or American Indian
- have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- have high blood pressure (above 140/90)
- have low HDL (good cholesterol) and high levels of blood fats
- have had diabetes when pregnant or gave birth to a large baby (over 9 pounds)
- are active less than three times a week

### **Where can I find out more?**

Speak with your healthcare provider. You can also find out more on the web at:

<http://www.diabetesinMichigan.org>.

**Or contact the Community Health Agency representatives at:**

Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph Counties  
517-279-9561, ext. 144