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# Wellness Matters

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## Your Healthy Body

# Know Your Risk: Diabetes

Between 90 and 95 percent of those diagnosed with diabetes in the United States have Type 2 diabetes. Formerly called *adult onset diabetes* or *noninsulin-dependent diabetes*, the condition is growing at an alarming rate due to increasing obesity levels.

### About the Condition

Type 2 diabetes causes the body to resist insulin, the hormone that controls the absorption of sugar. As a result, a normal glucose level cannot be maintained. One can develop Type 2 diabetes at any age,

including the childhood years. Unlike Type 1 diabetes, Type 2 is usually preventable with a balanced diet and exercise.

Unfortunately, once present, Type 2 diabetes cannot be cured and can be life-threatening if left untreated.

### Causes and Risk Factors

While it is not completely understood how Type 2 diabetes develops, research has shown

the following factors significantly increase your risk:

- obesity; high blood pressure
- genetics; increasing age
- physical inactivity
- untreated pre-diabetes
- having suffered from gestational diabetes



- abnormal cholesterol levels
- ethnicity

### Symptoms

Be aware of symptoms that include increased thirst, frequent

urination, extreme hunger, fatigue, unexplained weight loss, blurred vision; slow-healing sores, or dark skin patches in folds and creases of the body.

**Testing** Those 45 years of age or older, or under age 45 who are overweight, should be tested for diabetes; serious complications can arise if left untreated. Speak with your doctor and visit [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) to learn more.

## Flu Season Is Here

It's not too late to protect yourself against this season's flu. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) advises that flu illnesses peak between December and February, causing difficulties for people of any age; children and the elderly are most vulnerable. Try the following tips to help your family stay healthy this winter:

- Get vaccinated; it's the best chance of avoiding the flu.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick; stay away from others when you feel under the weather.
- Wash your hands often using soap and warm water to protect against germs.
- Get plenty of sleep, stay physically active, and drink plenty of water to keep your immune system strong.
- Manage stress and eat a nutritious diet with healthy grains, fruits, vegetables, and fiber.

## Indoor Air Pollution?

The mention of air pollution often brings to mind images of city streets packed with cars or a pollen-laden spring breeze. However, indoor air pollution can be as much of a problem as outdoor pollution. A few sources of indoor air pollution include the following:

- Tobacco smoke
- Mold, pollen, and pet dander
- Radon and carbon monoxide
- Household products such as cleaners, paint thinners, and glue

The effects of indoor air pollution can range from mild discomfort to the development of diseases such as respiratory ailments and cancer. Young children, the elderly, and those with asthma or allergies may suffer the most from poor air quality. Combat indoor air pollution with these strategies:

- Open windows for a few minutes every day to allow in fresh air, even during winter
- Vacuum and mop the floor rather than sweep
- Don't allow smoking indoors
- Test for radon; install a carbon monoxide detector and be aware of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning as shown below
- Replace your plug-in air freshener and artificially scented cleaners with fragrance-free and naturally scented products



## Healthy & Delicious

### Healthier Snacking for Better Health

Replacing unhealthy eating habits can be difficult. One key to making lasting improvements to your diet is to make changes in stages. Start with a simple change and stick to it for a week; after mastering that one change, add another.

Healthier snacking is a good place to start. For example, try substituting chips and candy for prepared snack-sized portions of healthy alternatives like these:

- 2 cups raspberries
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 medium-sized apple
- 1 hard-boiled egg
- 6 ounces fat-free yogurt
- 1 handful roasted peanuts
- 1 stick string cheese
- 1/4 cup fat-free pretzels or 5 pita chips with 2 tablespoons hummus
- 1/2 cup salsa with 15 baked tortilla chips

Encourage healthier eating at home by stocking snacks like these and offering kid-sized, instead of adult-sized, snacks—for instance, a typical snack for an adult may be a full container of yogurt, but for a pre-schooler, two or three tablespoons is probably enough.