

- going to the toilet all the time, especially at night
- extreme tiredness
- weight loss
- slow healing of wounds
- blurred vision.

The complications

Diabetes is serious because it can lead to life-threatening complications. These include:

- blindness
- kidney failure
- heart disease
- stroke
- nerve damage that can lead to amputations.

But the good news is that you can reduce your risk of developing complications by getting diagnosed early and then controlling your diabetes. You can live a full and healthy life with diabetes but the key is getting diagnosed as early as possible.

What to do next

If you think anything you've read in this leaflet applies to you go to your doctor and ask him/her to test you for diabetes. Diabetes is a serious condition that needs treatment. **The sooner you act the better.**

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Sources:

Diabetes UK

<http://www.diabetes.org.uk/>

American Diabetes Association

<http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-statistics.jsp>

Vision Connection

www.visionconnection.org

Diabetes:

Are YOU at Risk?



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There are 20.8 million children and adults in the United States, or 7% of the population, who have diabetes. While an estimated 14.6 million have been diagnosed, unfortunately, 6.2 million people (or nearly one-third) are unaware that they have the disease.

Could **you** be one of them? Read this leaflet to find out more...

Diabetes is serious. If left untreated it can lead to blindness, kidney failure, heart disease and other life-threatening complications. Many people with diabetes have had it for between nine and 12 years before it is diagnosed. By this time many of these people will have started to develop some of the complications. But the **good news** is that if you spot your diabetes early you can greatly reduce the risk of serious health problems.

Type 1 vs. Type 2 diabetes

There are two main types of diabetes. **Type 1 diabetes** usually affects people under 40 and is treated with insulin injections, diet and regular physical activity. **Type 2 diabetes** is usually found in white people over 40 years old and in Blacks, Asians, and people from minority ethnic groups aged over 25 years. It can be treated with diet and physical activity alone – although most people will also need tablets and sometimes insulin injections. Over three quarters of people with diabetes have Type 2. **This leaflet is aimed at people with Type 2 diabetes.**

Are you at risk?

If you are white and over 40 years old, or if you're black, Asian or from a minority ethnic group and over 25 years old and have **one or more** of

the following risk factors, you should ask your doctor for a test for diabetes:

- A close member of your family has Type 2 diabetes (parent or brother or sister).
- You're overweight or your waist is 31.5 inches or over for women; 35 inches or over for Asian men and 37 inches or over for white and black men.
- You have high blood pressure or you've had a heart attack or a stroke.
- You're a woman with polycystic ovary syndrome and you are overweight.
- You've been told you have impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glycemia.
- You're a woman and you've had gestational diabetes.
- You have severe mental health problems.

The more risk factors that apply to you, the **greater your risk** of having diabetes.

Your age

You're at risk of diabetes if you're over 40 or you're over 25 and are black, Asian or from a minority ethnic group. The risk also rises with age so the older you get the more at risk you are.

The family

Having diabetes in the family puts you at risk. The closer the relative is, the greater the risk. So if your mom or dad has diabetes, rather than your aunt or uncle, it's more likely you will develop the condition too.

Ethnicity

African-Caribbean or South Asian people are at least five times more likely to have diabetes than the white population.

Your weight

Not all people with diabetes are overweight but the statistics show that over 80 percent of people diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes are overweight. The more overweight and the more inactive you are the greater your risk. If you don't know whether you're overweight, ask your doctor to measure your BMI.

The symptoms

The symptoms of untreated diabetes will usually be very obvious in people with Type 1 diabetes but not so clear or non-existent in people with Type 2 diabetes. Taking early action is key so if any of the following apply to you, ask your doctor for a diabetes test:

- increased thirst