

What to look for at a glance



Complications of diabetes

The complications of diabetes develop gradually. When too much sugar stays in the bloodstream for a long time, it can affect the blood vessels, nerves, eyes, kidneys and cardiovascular system.

Complications may include, but are not limited to:

- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Severe foot infections, which may lead to gangrene which may result in amputation
- End-stage kidney failure

After 10 to 15 years of onset, the prevalence of all diabetes-related complications increases markedly. Type 2 diabetes can often be prevented or delayed by reducing the risk factors and adopting a healthier lifestyle.¹

Staying vigilant

However, diabetes doesn't hide that well if you're vigilant. There are numerous ways for you to know if you have diabetes.

If you don't know your blood glucose level, see your healthcare provider as soon as possible to take a fasting blood test or Hemoglobin A1C test. Your healthcare provider can advise you on what tests are best to track, diagnose and help manage your blood glucose levels.

If you have any of the symptoms or risk factors below, check those off and bring them to the attention of your doctor.

Don't let diabetes impact your life. Remember, when you know what to look for, diabetes can't hide.

Know your body: Signs you might have diabetes

Know your blood glucose level ²	Examples of symptoms ²	Examples of risk factors ²
<p>Normal: Fasting blood glucose level is below 100 mg/dL (5.6 mmol/L). Fasting means at least 8 hours without food or liquids other than water.</p> <p>Prediabetes: Fasting blood glucose values of 100–125 mg/dL (5.6–6.9 mmol/L)</p> <p>Diabetes: Fasting blood glucose level is 126 mg/dL (7.0 mmol/L) or higher on two separate tests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent urination • Increased thirst • Unintended weight loss • Fatigue and weakness • Increased hunger • Infections and cuts that are slow to heal • Numbness, tingling, burning or intense sensitivity in certain areas of the skin, especially in the feet and hands • Dry, itchy skin • Frequent bladder or vaginal infections • Blurred vision • Areas of darkened skin, usually in the armpits and neck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family history of diabetes, particularly a mother, father, sister or brother • Overweight or obese • Age: Your risk increases as you get older, especially after 45 • Inactivity or sedentary lifestyle • HDL (“good”) cholesterol of less than 35 mg/dL (0.9 mmol/L) and/or triglyceride level of greater than 250 mg/dL (2.8 mmol/L) • Diagnosis of prediabetes or gestational diabetes (when you were pregnant) or gave birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds • Polycystic ovary syndrome • Race and ethnicity: Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islanders • Fat distribution: Storing fat in your abdomen

Sources:

1. World Health Organization. Diabetes, November 10, 2021. Available from www.who.org.
2. Mayo Clinic. Type 2 Diabetes, January 20, 2021. Available from www.mayoclinic.org.

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