

# Diabetes

**20.8 million Americans have diabetes.**

**6.7 million of them don't know it.**

There's a growing problem in America. Each year nearly 1.5 million people in the United States are diagnosed with diabetes. But millions more still have no idea they have it.

What's the big deal? Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. It has many complications, including heart attack and stroke, blindness, and kidney disease.

(\*The above statistics are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.)

## What is Diabetes?

People with diabetes have difficulty changing food into energy. Your body converts food into a sugar called glucose, which is carried by your blood to cells in your body. The cells need a chemical called insulin to help them process the glucose into energy.

When a person has diabetes their body may not produce enough insulin or their cells may not be able to use the insulin to convert the glucose into energy. So, the glucose builds up in the blood, where the cells can't use it.

"Type 2" diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, accounting for 90-95 percent of all cases. Other types of diabetes include "type 1," which occurs in children and young adults, and "gestational diabetes," which can occur during pregnancy.

## Risk Factors

You may be at risk to get type 2 diabetes if you:

- Are over age 45
- Have a family history of diabetes
- Are overweight
- Do not exercise regularly
- Have had gestational diabetes
- Have high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Are African American, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic, or Pacific Islander

## Warning Signs

Diabetes symptoms may be mild or even nonexistent, but be sure to let your internist know if you experience:

- Extreme thirst and/or hunger
- Fatigue
- Frequent need to urinate
- Unusual weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet

Frequent infections  
Bruises that are slow to heal

## Get Tested!

Your internist can prescribe a simple blood test to diagnose diabetes. You may need to take the test twice to confirm the results.

## Prevention and Treatment

You can lower your risk of getting type 2 diabetes by taking a few steps. Eat a healthy diet high in fruits, vegetables, fish, poultry and whole grains. Exercise regularly. Lose weight if you are overweight.

Diabetes has no cure, but can be managed. Diet control and exercise are important, and home monitoring of blood glucose may be required. Pills or insulin injections may also be prescribed to help lower the blood glucose level.

Nearly 75 percent of people with diabetes also have high blood pressure, which can lead to many complications, including death. Blood pressure can usually be controlled with lifestyle modifications and prescription drugs.

## The ACP Diabetes Portal

Access free tools, resources and research supporting diabetes care. Patients and clinicians have access to information specific to their needs at the [ACP Diabetes Portal](#).

## ACP Diabetes Initiative

Due to the success of the first three years of the American College of Physicians (ACP) and the American College of Physicians Foundation (ACPF) Diabetes Initiative, the program has received additional funding from Novo Nordisk Inc. to continue the initiative for an additional two years through December 2009.

Says Vincenza Snow, MD, FACP, director of clinical programs and quality of care at ACP, "We are excited to have the opportunity to continue producing programs and products that will improve the health and quality of life for people with diabetes."

The goals of the initiative include providing patients with educational tools to improve their diabetes treatment.

### Team-Based Approach Improves Diabetes Care

[Read article](#) | [View video](#)

### Listen to a Patient Testimonial about the Diabetes Initiative

[Launch Audio](#)

### Listen to a Physician Testimonial about the Diabetes Initiative

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### Dr. Snow Comments about the Diabetes Initiative (In Spanish)

[Launch Video Stream](#)

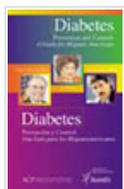
## Downloadable Information



Download an "ACP Special Report" brochure on [Managing the ABCs of Diabetes](#). The brochure is also [available in Spanish](#).



Download [Living with diabetes: A guide for African Americans](#).



Download a booklet about the [prevention and control of diabetes in Hispanic Americans](#) (in both Spanish and English).



Download a brochure containing [the information on this page](#).

(Above items are in PDF format: [Adobe Acrobat](#) is needed.)

## Internal Medicine Report

For more information about diabetes, view the following video news reports from the **American College of Physicians'** award-winning [Internal Medicine Report](#) series based on new clinical research from *Annals of Internal Medicine*:

### Team-Based Approach Improves Diabetes Care

[Read article](#) | [View video](#)

### ACP and ACP Foundation Unveil Tools to Improve the Way Diabetes is Managed in the Doctor's Office and at Home

[Read article](#) | [View video](#)

### Aerobic and Resistance Exercise Improved Blood Sugar Control in People with Diabetes

[Read article](#) | [View video](#)

### Selenium Supplements Linked with Increased Risk for Diabetes in 8-Year Study

[Read article](#) | [View video](#)

### Women with Diabetes Left Behind in Overall Drop in Death Rates in the U.S.

[Read article](#) | [View video](#)

### New Study Suggests Long-Term Coffee Drinking May Reduce Risk for Type 2 Diabetes

[Read article](#) | [View video](#)

### Prudent Diet Reduces Risk for Developing Type 2 Diabetes

[Read article](#) | [View video](#)

Microsoft Windows Media Player is needed to view the video. If you don't have the player installed please [click here](#) to download.

## Annals of Internal Medicine Patient Summaries

Search for **diabetes** in ACP's [Annals of Internal Medicine Patient Summaries](#). *Annals of Internal Medicine* is the leading peer-reviewed internal medicine clinical journal.

### Additional information may also be found on the following Web sites:

American Diabetes Association [ [GO](#) ]

National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [ [GO](#) ]

Diabetes Public Health Resource from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [ [GO](#) ]

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