

SINAI HEALTH LINK

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HEALTH LINK

1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624)

DIABETES IS DANGEROUS ... BUT YOU'RE IN CHARGE

Are you losing weight, but you're not on a diet? Are you thirsty all the time? Do you go to the bathroom a lot? Those could be signs of diabetes.

The first thing to do is see a doctor. A quick, simple test will tell if there's too much glucose in your blood. If there is, you have diabetes.

Glucose is a sugar your body uses for fuel.

If it stays in the blood instead of

going into your cells, you have less energy. And if it's in your bloodstream a long time, it can hurt your eyes, kidneys, nerves and heart. That's why the blood test is important. With treatment, you can live a healthy and normal life. Without treatment, diabetes can kill.

"There are two main kinds of diabetes, Type 1 and Type 2," says Paula Butler, MD, a doctor at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago who specializes in diabetes and similar diseases.

"Type 1 used to be called insulin-dependent diabetes. It is caused by damage to the pancreas, a small organ in your body that makes insulin. Insulin helps cells use glucose. But when the pancreas is damaged, glucose stays in the blood.

"In Type 2 diabetes, a person's body does not make enough insulin, or the cells don't use the insulin."



No matter which form of diabetes you have, you need to lower the amount of glucose in your blood. People with Type 1 take insulin shots to replace the insulin the body isn't making. People with Type 2 may not need shots. But with both types of diabetes, it's important to watch your diet and to exercise regularly.

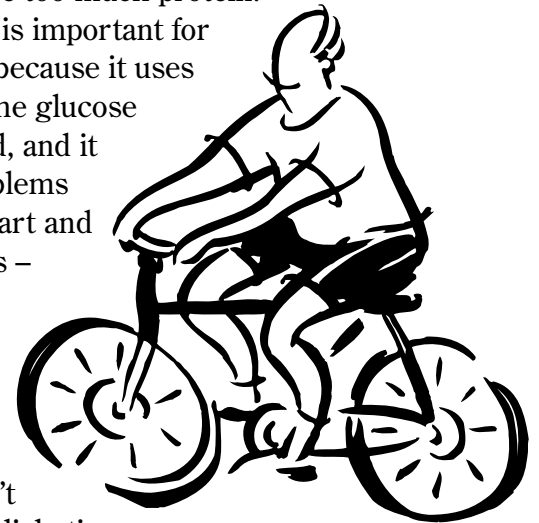
A good diet helps your body change food into blood sugar. Doctors used to believe that diabetics should just avoid sugar. Now they know that a healthy, balanced diet is best. It should be low in fat, contain starches, and not have too much protein.

Exercise is important for diabetics because it uses

up some of the glucose in your blood, and it reduces problems with your heart and blood vessels – the biggest killer of people with diabetes.

If diet and exercise don't help Type 2 diabetics, they may need pills or insulin shots.

"Being told you are diabetic can be very scary," Dr. Butler says, "but by eating a good diet, exercising and taking insulin, if needed, you can still lead a healthy life."



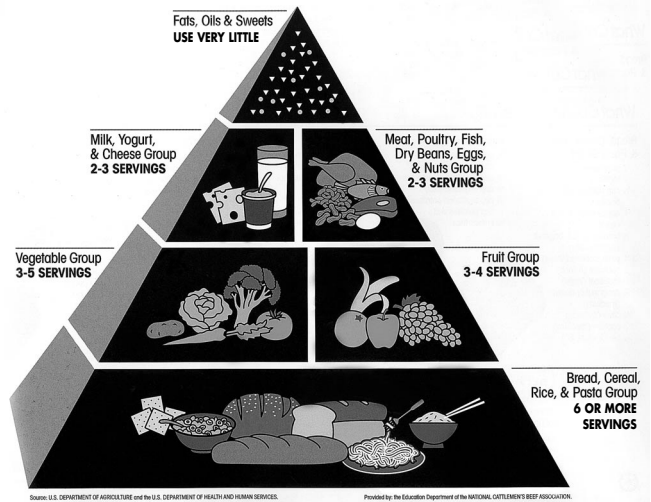
If you have questions about diabetes, ask your family doctor or call 1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624) or 773-257-6289 (TTY) to see a Sinai doctor.

AVOID COMPLICATIONS

People with diabetes must watch their diet and exercise regularly. Some need to take insulin, or should test the glucose level in their blood several times a day. These steps can help prevent some of the bad things that can happen to diabetics:

- Every year, as many as 24,000 people in the United States lose their eyesight because of diabetes.
- As many as one diabetic in five gets kidney disease. Some need dialysis or a kidney transplant to live.
- Diabetics are 2 to 4 times more likely to have a stroke or heart disease.
- Nearly two-thirds of diabetics have some nerve damage. Each year, more than 50,000 people lose a foot or leg because of problems caused by diabetes.
- Diabetes can cause impotence.

FOOD PYRAMID



Did You Know?

- One out of every 17 people in the United States has diabetes.
- More than one-third of people with diabetes don't know they have it.
- African-Americans and Latinos get diabetes almost twice as often as other people.
- Diabetes is the seventh-leading cause of death in the United States.
- Many people don't learn they have diabetes until there is a serious complication.

ASK YOUR SINAI DOCTOR

- Q.** Besides race, what are some other things that increase my chance of developing diabetes?
- A.** You can't do much about your age – folks over 45 have a higher risk – or the fact that other people in your family have had diabetes. But the chance of developing diabetes also is higher for people who are overweight or who don't exercise regularly. Cholesterol also matters: If your HDL (the good cholesterol) is low or your triglycerides are high, you're at greater risk. The best thing to do is have a blood test. Then you can stop worrying if you don't have diabetes. Or you can get the care you need if you do have diabetes. Either way, watch your diet – and exercise!