

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that keeps your body from using glucose (a type of sugar) normally. Glucose is the main source of energy for the body's cells. The levels of glucose in the blood are controlled by a hormone called insulin, which is made by the pancreas. Insulin helps glucose enter the cells.

There are three main types of diabetes: **Type 1**, **Type 2**, and **Gestational Diabetes**

- In Type 1 Diabetes, the pancreas makes no insulin.
- In Type 2 Diabetes, the pancreas does not make enough insulin or your body is not able to use the insulin the pancreas makes.
- In Gestational Diabetes (during pregnancy), the mother is not able to make enough insulin to cover the needs of both mother and baby.

Risk Factors for Diabetes

You are more at risk for getting diabetes if you:

- **Are from a family where others have diabetes**
- **Are overweight**
- **Are over age 40**
- **Are not active**
- **Had diabetes during pregnancy** (Gestational Diabetes) or a baby weighing 9 pounds (4 kilograms) or more at birth
- **Are of African, Asian, Latino or Pacific Islander descent**

Signs of Diabetes

- **Being very thirsty**
- **Feeling tired**
- **Needing to pee often**
- **Blurred vision**
- **Weight loss**
- **Wounds are slow to heal**
- **Constant hunger**
- **Itchy skin**
- **Infections**
- **Numbness or tingling in feet and/or hands**
- **Problems with sexual activity**

Often people have no signs even though their blood glucose level is high. You can be checked for diabetes with a blood test.



For more information call Customer Service at **(415) 615-4555**.
Or visit **www.healthysanfrancisco.org**

Managing Your Diabetes

The goal is to keep your glucose level as near to normal as possible. Taking care of yourself may include:

- **Exercising**
- **Planning healthier meals**
- **Learning signs to know when your glucose level is too low or too high**
- **Taking medicine - insulin or pills**
- **Keeping all appointments with your health care team**
- **Attending diabetes classes**
- **Testing glucose levels** (not needed for every person with diabetes)

Talk to your provider, nurse, and dietitian to learn how to manage your diabetes.



Sources:

"Understanding Diabetes," Ohio State University Medical Center, Mount Carmel Health System and OhioHealth, via www.healthinfotranslations.org

"What Diabetes is" National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, www.niddk.nih.gov

WebMD: www.webmd.com

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