Diabetes Awareness and Information

All parts of the body (muscles, brain, heart, and liver) need energy to work. This energy comes from the food and drinks we eat.

Our bodies digest the food we eat by mixing it with fluids (acids and enzymes) in the stomach. When the stomach digests food, the carbohydrate (sugars and starches) in the food breaks down into another type of sugar, called glucose.

The stomach and small intestines absorb the glucose and then release it into the bloodstream. Once in the bloodstream, glucose can be used immediately for energy or stored in our bodies, to be used later.

However, our bodies need insulin (a hormone) in order to use or store glucose for energy. Without insulin, glucose stays in the bloodstream, keeping blood sugar levels high.

Diabetes is a disease where our body cannot use the glucose we get from eating, because we do not have the right amount of insulin. Glucose can build up and cause problems in almost all parts of our body. It keeps the organs from getting what they need to work properly.

People can have either type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

**Type 1**
- More common in younger people
- Requires insulin injections for life
- Lifelong healthy habits like eating well and exercising are very important for managing this

**Type 2**
- More common in older people
- In some people it can be prevented or controlled with diet and exercise
- Can be treated with pills, but some people might need insulin injections
How do I know I have diabetes?

Sometimes people do not feel any different when they have diabetes. They find out because their doctor tests their blood and finds their glucose level is higher than it should be. You might have some of the symptoms noted in the chart below.

In addition, when your glucose is high, people might tell you that your breath smells fruity. Sometimes when you have diabetes, your glucose can also drop too low, which is called hypoglycemia. This can make you confused, dizzy, sweaty, or shaky.

What can I do?

- Carefully follow all the instructions that your doctor and other health care personnel gives you to manage your diabetes.
- People with Type 1 Diabetes will need insulin. Insulin is given through a small needle. Some people also have pumps that they wear all day that give them insulin when they need it. All people with diabetes need to check their blood glucose.
- People with Type 2 Diabetes may also need insulin. Sometimes they only need pills.
- Some people can control their Type 2 diabetes by eating healthy and exercising regularly. This can also stop Type 2 diabetes before it starts.

Staying Healthy with Diabetes

- Eat right, such as the Mediterranean style of eating—less sugary foods, more healthy fats.
- Some sugar is OK if it is part of a healthy, balanced eating pattern. Talk to your dietitian or doctor about an eating plan best for you.
- Eat around the same time every day and do not skip meals. This keeps your glucose levels balanced.

Cont.
Exercise
Keep a snack handy
Do not smoke
Check your feet regularly
Check your eyesight regularly.

What is prediabetes and how common is it?
Prediabetes means a person’s blood glucose (sugar) level is higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. If left untreated, this can progress into type 2 diabetes. 1 in 3 American adults has prediabetes, but only 10 percent of them know they have it. There are some prediabetes risks you cannot control, such as age and family history. But there are other things you can do to reduce your risk, like increasing your physical activity and adjusting your diet. There usually are no symptoms with prediabetes. Talk to your doctor and get a simple blood test to see if you have it.

What causes prediabetes?
If you have prediabetes, the cells in your body do not respond normally to insulin. Your pancreas makes more insulin to try to get the cells to respond. Eventually your pancreas cannot keep up and your blood sugar rises, setting the stage for prediabetes—and type 2 diabetes down the road.

Who’s at risk for prediabetes or type 2 diabetes?

WHO’S AT RISK for prediabetes or type 2 diabetes?
You could have prediabetes or type 2 diabetes and not know it—there often aren’t any symptoms. That’s why it makes sense to know the risk factors:

- 45+ years old
- Physically active less than 3 times/week
- Family history of type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- History of gestational diabetes
- Overweight

*Diabetes during pregnancy: Giving birth to a baby weighing 9+ pounds is also a risk factor.

DID YOU KNOW... African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Pacific Islanders, and some Asian Americans are at higher risk.

If you have any of the risk factors, ask your doctor about getting your blood sugar tested.
How close is prediabetes to type 2 diabetes?

If you have prediabetes, losing a small amount of weight and getting regular physical activity can significantly lower your risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Small changes in diet and exercise can go a long way. Evidence shows that the National Diabetes Prevention Program is a very effective way to reverse prediabetes.

NEED TO REVERSE PREDIABETES? FIND A PROGRAM.

With early diagnosis, prediabetes can often be reversed. By joining the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP), you can learn how to make small changes, like improving your diet and exercising more, which can help reverse prediabetes and prevent type 2 diabetes. Local programs are available as noted here.

McClellan Street Health Center
McClellan St. Health Center
Schenectady, NY 12304
(518) 347-5421

Center for Excellence in Aging & Community Wellness
135 Western Ave., RI 390
Albany, NY 12222
(518) 442-5530

Capital Care Medical Group
501 New Karner Rd.
Albany, NY 12205
(518) 640-3260

Diabetes Support Group - Learning and Support Group for Adults with Diabetes. This group is designed to provide ongoing education, support and social networking for adults with diabetes and their families. The sessions are facilitated by Certified Diabetes Educators.

Resources:
University of South Florida, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities
American Diabetes Association
Ellis Diabetes Care, Schenectady, NY

Do you have a questions or concerns about what to eat?
If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County’s Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible to have a free consultation with a Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269. Leave a message, if necessary, for dietitian to call you back.

Check out our website for nutrition resources:
http://cceschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors