

Naturopathic Medical Clinic

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DIABETES

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease process where the body can no longer produce or utilize insulin, leading to a problem maintaining an adequate level of blood sugar. There are two main types of diabetes. Type I usually develops younger in life and is due to the pancreas not producing adequate insulin. Type II usually occurs later in life and may be due to multiple factors. One such factor is insulin resistance where the cells are no longer sensitive to insulin. Insulin is used by cells as a key to let glucose (blood sugar) into the cell. When blood sugar rises after eating a meal, insulin is released from the pancreas to help the cells utilize the glucose and to return the blood sugar level back to normal.

What are the symptoms of diabetes?

Diabetes often goes undiagnosed, because the symptoms are not recognized as severe enough to seek treatment.

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Unusual weight loss
- Increased fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurry vision

Risk Factors

You are at risk of developing diabetes if you have a family history of diabetes or you are overweight. Obesity leads to insulin resistance which leads to diabetes. Take a diabetes risk test online to find out your risk of developing diabetes at: <http://www.diabetes.org/risk-test.jsp>

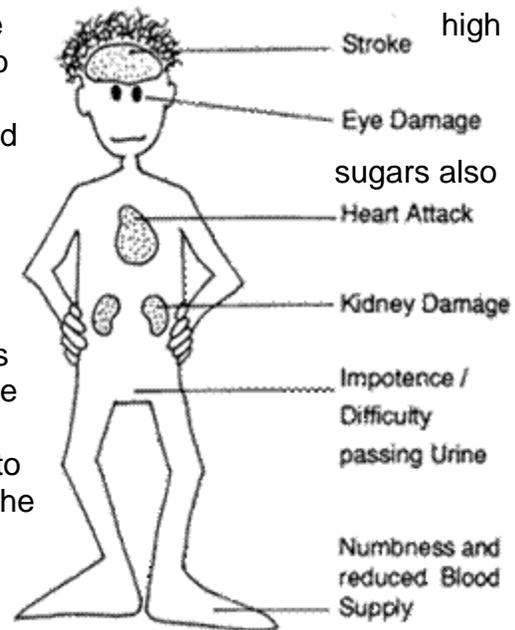
Detection

Diabetes can be detected with routine blood testing. A fasting blood glucose test is the main test used to diagnose diabetes. A normal fasting blood glucose is less than 90 mg/dl. Pre-diabetes is 90-125 mg/dl. Diabetes is diagnosed when the fasting blood glucose is 126 mg/dl or more. Hemoglobin A1C is another measure of blood glucose levels and can be used to evaluate the blood sugar control over the last 3 months. Another test, the oral glucose tolerance test can

be used to evaluate the body's ability to control blood sugar levels. Early detection and treatment allows diabetes to be prevented if in the pre-diabetic stage, or the complications prevented once diagnosed.

Complications of Diabetes

The complications of diabetes are due to the circulating sugars in the blood which leads to damage of the blood vessels. Diabetes has been shown to increase the risk of stroke and heart attacks. The high circulating blood increase the probability of developing high blood pressure. Diabetes causes damage to the eye called diabetic retinopathy, which leads to blindness. There is also damage to the nerves (diabetic neuropathy) which leads to a loss of sensation usually beginning in the hands and feet. Diabetes also damages the kidneys (diabetic nephropathy) which leads to kidney failure. Diabetes may also increase the occurrence of secondary infections such as yeast infections, and increases the time it takes to heal from wounds.



What can you do?

Be tested today to see if you have pre-diabetes or diabetes. Manage your blood sugar by eating a low glycemic index diet. The glycemic index is a measure of how fast a food can increase blood sugar. You can find charts online or ask at the front desk for a copy. One example is: <http://www.southbeach-diet-plan.com/glycemicfoodchart.htm> Foods that have a high glycemic index include simple carbohydrates such as sugar, white pastas, pastries, white rice, and many cereals, to name a few.

Exercise increases the body's utilization of glucose, so develop a regular exercise program. There are many options to prevent the complications of diabetes and to help manage your blood sugar. Contact your doctor today to find out more information on how you can manage your diabetes.