



Are you at Risk from the World's Fastest Growing Disease?

Risk Factors:

- I am over 40 years old.
- I have (or have had) a blood relative with diabetes.
- I have had a baby weighing more than 4 kgs (9 pounds), or have had diabetes during pregnancy.
- I don't exercise regularly (ie. Exercise less than half an hour per day, three days per week).
- My waist measurement is more than 100 cms (40 inches) for a man or more than 95 cms (37 inches) for a woman.
- My blood pressure is higher than 140/90 or I take blood pressure medication.
- I was born in Southern Europe, the Middle East, South East Asia; am Polynesian, or Asian Indian.
- I urinate excessively.
- I am always thirsty.
- I have just lost weight for no reason.
- I sometimes have numbness or tingling in my feet or legs
- I have blurred vision
- I'm always tired
- I have itching skin or I often have skin infections.

If you said yes to two or more questions, you're at high risk for developing diabetes, or you may have it already. You should see your doctor for a check up – many people have this disease without knowing it.

One reason why so many people around the world are dying prematurely of diabetes is because of ignorance about its dangers. When diabetes is undiagnosed or uncontrolled, there's a high risk of complications like heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, blindness, limb amputation, and impotence.

Why don't we take diabetes more seriously?

Partly because people with diabetes often look healthy. Some people with the disease also feel quite well and think they don't need to control it. But while diabetes might be invisible on the outside, it's silently doing damage inside.

Having diabetes means the body can't control levels of a substance called glucose in the blood – when glucose builds up in the body it can cause harm to many different organs. Another reason why diabetes is increasing in many countries is – ironically – increased affluence. More money to spend on fatty foods, as well as on cars and labor saving appliances, makes us fatter and less active – two things which increase the risk of diabetes. It's time to take diabetes seriously. If you think you're at risk, see your doctor.



If you're not at risk now, it's still a good idea to look at your lifestyle – should you make changes to reduce your risk in the future? Losing

weight, being more active, and eating a healthy diet (with less fat) can both help prevent diabetes and control it.

If you already have diabetes, a healthy lifestyle and regular visits to your doctor can reduce the risk of complications. If you haven't already told close relatives that you have diabetes, let them know – knowing diabetes is in the family is important information for their future health, and can help them take steps to reduce their risk.

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