

Diabetes



Leader Talking Points on Diabetes

- Diabetes is a chronic disease in which the body either does not produce enough insulin or cannot effectively use the insulin it produces
- Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar; insufficient insulin or the inability to properly use insulin effectively leads to elevated blood sugar levels or hyperglycemia
- Over time, persistently elevated blood sugar levels cause serious damage to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels
- Diabetes is a major health problem
 - An estimated 422 million adults globally have diabetes
 - Approximately 30 million people in the U.S. are living with diabetes, and another 84 million have prediabetes
- Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disorder where the body's immune system attacks insulin-producing cells and the body does not produce enough insulin
 - Approximately 5% of diabetics have type 1 diabetes
 - Often starts quickly and has severe symptoms
 - Occurs most often in children, teens, and young adults, though may occur at any age
 - Must use insulin every day to survive
- Type 2 diabetes is a disorder where the body either does not respond to insulin appropriately, does not make enough insulin, or both
 - Around 90-95% of diabetics have type 2 diabetes
 - Can be prevented or delayed through lifestyle changes
 - Gradual disease that develops over many years
 - Occurs most often in older individuals, though increasing in younger age groups
- Gestational diabetes is a type of diabetes that only develops during pregnancy and usually disappears after delivery; however, it increases the mother's risk of developing diabetes later in life
- Prediabetes is a term to describe when the blood sugar (glucose) level is higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be called type 2 diabetes
 - Approximately 33% of U.S. adults have prediabetes, but only 10% know
 - Prediabetes can often be reversed through lifestyle changes such as increasing physical activity and losing weight
- Risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes include:
 - Being overweight or obese, particularly if extra weight is in the belly
 - Being physically inactive
 - Age 45 or older

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- Smoking
 - Family history of diabetes in a first-degree relative (i.e., mother, father, siblings)
 - For women, having diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)
 - Some ethnic groups have increased risk – African American, Hispanic Latino, American Indian, and Asian Pacific Islander
- Not all individuals with diabetes or prediabetes experience symptoms of the disease; however, common diabetes symptoms include:
 - Excessive thirst
 - Frequent urination
 - Fatigue
 - Weight loss
 - Blurred vision
 - Potential health problems caused by untreated/inadequately treated diabetes include:
 - Heart attack
 - Stroke
 - Eye disease that leads to vision loss or blindness
 - Kidney disease
 - Nerve damage that can cause numbness or pain in the hands and feet (neuropathy)
 - The need for amputation of toes, fingers, or other body parts
 - A diabetes diagnosis can be confirmed through one or more blood tests: fasting plasma glucose, oral glucose tolerance test, and hemoglobin A1C
 - Diabetes treatment includes a variety of efforts to control blood sugar and avoid complications, including:
 - Education
 - Weight reduction
 - Proper diet
 - Regular physical activity
 - Blood sugar monitoring
 - Medication
 - Quitting (or not starting) smoking
 - Type 2 diabetes and prediabetes can be prevented and sometimes reversed with just lifestyle modification
 - Research has shown people who lost weight and exercised regularly reduced their risk of developing diabetes by 58%
 - The Caterpillar Health Exam benefit is free to eligible employees and includes glucose testing
 - Call your local Caterpillar Medical office or 877-838-0596 to learn more or schedule your free Caterpillar Health Exam