

Diabetes



Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that your body needs to convert sugar, starches and other foods into energy. When you have diabetes your blood glucose, or blood sugar, level is elevated. If left untreated, diabetes can lead to serious, long-term complications including kidney failure, blindness, heart disease and other life-threatening conditions.

Currently, 20.8 million Americans have diabetes, and close to one-third of them do not know it. More than 90 percent of people diagnosed with diabetes have Type 2 diabetes, which is usually associated with older age, obesity, lack of physical activity and a family history of the disease.

SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES

While Type 2 diabetes usually occurs in people over 40, more young people are developing the disease, often because of poor diet, lack of physical activity and obesity. Symptoms of diabetes include increased urination, thirst, extreme fatigue, blurred vision and dehydration. If you suspect that you may have diabetes, see your physician immediately.

While diabetes has no cure, people with the disease can live healthier lives by managing their disease. Important components of diabetes management include regular exercise, a healthy diet and medication.

PREVENTING AND MANAGING YOUR DIABETES

The good news is that Type 2 diabetes can be prevented. Research has found that lifestyle changes, such as a 5 to 10 percent weight loss and increased physical activity, can prevent or delay the development of Type 2 diabetes. In fact, when many people are first diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, their physicians recommend managing the disease through a well-balanced diet, like the one recommended by Curves, and exercise.

DIABETES AND EXERCISE

Everyone should exercise, but for people with diabetes exercise has extra health benefits: it helps to control weight and to keep blood glucose, or sugar, levels within a healthy range. In fact, 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise can lower blood glucose levels for 24 to 72 hours. Moderate intensity exercise is any exercise that increases body temperature and elevates the rate of breathing.

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends that people with Type 2 diabetes engage in physical activity at least three days a week. The ADA also recommends:

- At least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week (this might include your three weekly Curves workouts accompanied by a vigorous 30-minute walk twice a week) or 90 minutes of more vigorous activity a week (which might mean pumping up your Curves workouts a notch)
- Resistance exercise, such as weight training, three times a week (your three weekly Curves workouts meet this recommendation)

While exercise is good, it can lower your blood glucose level too much. It is important to monitor your blood glucose before and after any physical activity.

Of course, before you start any exercise program, talk to your doctor.