



Demystifying Diabetes

Your health is important.

Because the Youens and Duchicela Clinic believes this, the following is brought to you in an effort to provide wellness information that you can use to help manage and maintain your health.

This week, the focus is on diabetes.

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone of the body. When a person has diabetes, sugar builds up in the blood instead of moving into the cells. An abundance of sugar in the blood can lead to serious health problems, including heart disease and damage to the nerves and kidneys.

According to the American Diabetes Association, 7.8% of the American population—23.6 million individuals—lives with diabetes. This disease is serious; the association notes that diabetes causes more deaths per year than breast cancer and AIDS combined. This is, in part, because two out of three people who live with diabetes will die from heart disease or stroke.

Diabetes comes in several forms—Type 1, Type 2 and Gestational—and each type has its own symptoms and treatment plan. Diabetes can affect all areas of the population, including children.

Type 2 diabetes is most common, with 95% of patients having this form. Most patients who develop Type 2 will also have prediabetes, which means that their blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to yet be labeled “diabetic.” A doctor can perform a blood test to check for prediabetes.

However, diabetes can be difficult to detect because some patients will exhibit risk factors, while other patients will exhibit none, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).



However, it is best to see a doctor in the case of any of the following symptoms:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme hunger
- Sudden vision changes tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Feeling very tired much of the time
- Very dry skin
- Sores that are slow to heal
- More infections than usual

The CDC also notes that nausea, vomiting, or stomach pains may accompany some of these symptoms in the abrupt onset of Type 1 diabetes.

Whether an individual is recently diagnosed with diabetes or has been living with the disease for years, taking care of the body and working to manage the effects are important.

Since environmental factors often trigger diabetes, the good news is that individuals can work to control the disease, especially Type 2. Type 2 is preventable in many cases, mostly through lifestyle changes. Routine wellness check-ups, staying fit, ensuring proper nutrition, and being aware of changes in health are all avenues individuals can take to prevention.

For more information electronically, including the chance to take an online diabetes risk test, access www.diabetes.org.

The information provided here is not to be used as a substitute for medical attention. Remember that, should you have specific medical questions or desire more information, contact your doctor