

### **It's Diabetes Awareness Month – Do You Know the Warning Signs?**

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which your body doesn't properly break down your food and turn it into energy.

When someone has diabetes, their body either doesn't produce enough insulin or it is unable to use the insulin to its full potential.

Generally speaking, there are three types of diabetes someone can have: type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is when your body doesn't produce insulin due to an autoimmune reaction. Type 2 diabetes is when your body cannot maintain a healthy blood sugar level. Gestational diabetes is when women develop high blood sugar levels during their pregnancy, but it typically resolves once they have their baby. However, if a woman has gestational diabetes, she is at a higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

If diabetes goes untreated, the condition can lead to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, blindness, kidney and nerve damage, heart disease and stroke, among other health issues.

Dr. Mohammed Kazi, an endocrinologist at Advocate Christ Medical Center in Oak Lawn, Ill., shares the warning signs you should know:

- Increase in urination, especially during the night
- Fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Increased thirst
- Erectile dysfunction (ED)
- Headaches

"With lifestyle modifications, type 2 diabetes can be controlled by managing your diet and exercise regimens," says Dr. Kazi.

He recommends adhering to the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) guidelines to help manage the symptoms of diabetes:

- **Nutrition:** It's important to be highly aware of the food you eat, especially for people who have a BMI greater than 30. This group should also restrict calorie intake with the goal of reducing their body weight by at least 5-10%. Having a plant-based diet can help reduce your caloric intake.
- **Exercise:** Both aerobic and strength training exercise help improve one's glucose control, lipid profile and blood pressure. A healthy exercise goal for weight loss is 175 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise plus flexibility and strength training a week.
- **Sleep:** If someone with diabetes isn't getting enough sleep, it has been shown to elevate their blood sugar levels. It is recommended this group of people receive approximately seven hours of sleep a night to help manage their blood sugar.
- **Therapy:** Poor diabetes management heightens one's risk for depression and anxiety due to their blood sugar levels. It is important for the individual feeling this way to receive cognitive behavior therapy.
- **Quit smoking:** People with diabetes who smoke are at a higher risk to have heart complications and kidney disease. Smoking cessation courses and Nicotine replacement therapy should be considered.

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Wishing you joy and good health,

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