



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Diabetes Detection

American Diabetes Month — November 2011

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Diabetes is one of the most common diseases in the US, affecting nearly 26 million people. If not properly treated, it can lead to blindness, kidney failure, and amputation of limbs.

Nilka Rios Burrows is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss ways to prevent and control diabetes. Welcome to the show, Nilka.

[Ms. Burrows] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Nilka, what exactly is diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] Diabetes is a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood sugar, either because your body does not produce insulin or does not produce enough insulin, or your body does not use insulin properly. People with type 1 diabetes are usually diagnosed at earlier ages and need insulin to survive. Type 2 diabetes is usually diagnosed at later ages and is more common among people who are either overweight or obese, have a sedentary lifestyle, have a family history of diabetes, or are members of racial-ethnic minority groups, such as African Americans and Hispanics.

Type 2 is the more common form of diabetes. An important distinction between type 2 and type 1 diabetes is that type 2 diabetes can be prevented or controlled with lifestyle changes.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the most common symptoms of diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] Many people with diabetes do not show any symptoms, but if they do show symptoms, it'll be frequent urination, excessive thirst, unusual weight loss, extreme hunger, blurred vision, tingling or numbness in the hands or feet, feeling very tired much of the time, and perhaps having sores that are slow to heal.

[Dr. Gaynes] Why is it so important for people with diabetes to control their blood sugar?

[Ms. Burrows] Uncontrolled diabetes leads to serious complications. Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, lower limb amputations, and new cases of blindness among adults in the United States, and also a major cause of heart disease and stroke.

However, there are things that people can do to lower their risk for these and other complications of diabetes. For example, seeing a doctor regularly for your diabetes; controlling your blood sugar, your blood pressure, and your cholesterol; and getting dilated eye exams, foot exams, and flu shots annually. So talk to your doctor about how you can manage and take control of your diabetes.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, if you haven't yet been diagnosed with diabetes, how often should you be tested to see if you have it?

[Ms. Burrows] You should be tested every three years if you're older than 45 years, or if you're younger than 45 but are overweight or obese and have risk factors for diabetes, such as being physically inactive or having a relative with diabetes.

[Dr. Gaynes] What can people do to decrease their chances of ever getting diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] That's right – diabetes can be prevented and this is what you need to do. Number one - exercise regularly, two - lose weight, and three - eat a healthy diet.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/diabetes.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Nilka. I've been talking today with CDC's Nilka Rios Burrows about ways to prevent and control diabetes.

Remember: Symptoms of diabetes can include increased hunger and thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, unusual weight loss, and blurred vision. See your health care provider if you have these symptoms or a family history of diabetes. Early detection and treatment are important to control this common condition.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.