

DIABETES & CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

■ WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a disease that keeps the body from making or properly using insulin. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas. Insulin changes sugar, starches and other food into energy your body needs. There are two types of diabetes. Type 1 usually occurs in children or teens and results when the body fails to make insulin. Type 2 is the more common form of diabetes and usually occurs after age 45. Type 2 diabetes results from insulin resistance. This means that the body doesn't effectively use the insulin it makes. Type 2 diabetics' bodies may not make enough insulin, either. In recent years, there has been an alarming increase in type 2 diabetes in children and teens.

Over 7% (14.6 million) people in the US have been told they have diabetes. It is believed that another 6.2 million have diabetes and don't know it. Diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death in the United States.

■ HOW DOES DIABETES AFFECT HEART DISEASE?

Diabetics are more than twice as likely to be affected by heart disease and stroke as people who don't have diabetes. Diabetes speeds up the process of plaque build-up in the arteries. This causes arteries to narrow, resulting in less blood flow through the arteries. For this reason, diabetics tend to see heart and vascular problems at an earlier age. More than 65% of deaths in diabetic people are caused by heart and vascular disease. People with diabetes are also two to four times more likely to have strokes. 73% of diabetics have high blood pressure.



■ WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES?

- Older age
- Obesity
- Family history of diabetes
- Not getting enough exercise
- Race - African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans and Native Americans are at a higher risk

■ HOW IS TYPE 2 DIABETES MANAGED?

- Eating a healthy diet
- Taking medication to control high blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Exercising regularly
- Losing excess weight
- Taking oral medication like insulin