



## **Heart-Healthy Tips: Diabetes Signs and Prevention**

An estimated 23.6 million people in the United States - 7.8 percent of the population - have diabetes, a serious, lifelong condition. Diabetes is a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood glucose (blood sugar), resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. Diabetes can lead to serious complications and premature death. Now is the time to begin understanding the seriousness of the disease and what you can do to reduce your risk of diabetes.

About 5.7 million people are unaware of the fact that they have diabetes. Below are possible signs that you may be a diabetic. If you start to notice one or more of these signs, you should contact your doctor immediately:

- ▶ Your blood pressure is 130/80 or higher.
- ▶ You have pain in your chest.
- ▶ You have blurry or double vision, or feel pain or pressure in your eyes.
- ▶ You have foot problems -such as blisters, ingrown toenails, or cracked skin - that get infected.
- ▶ Your arms, hands, legs, or feet feel numb, or you feel shooting pains.

The good news about diabetes is that there are many things that you can do to lower your risk of developing the disease:

- ▶ Follow a healthy eating plan.
- ▶ Be physically active for 30 to 60 minutes most days.
- ▶ Do not keep chips, cookies, or candy in your home. Instead, stock your kitchen with snacks like raw vegetables, fruit, low-fat or nonfat yogurt, nuts, pumpkinseeds, or sunflower seeds.
- ▶ Drink plenty of water.
- ▶ Don't skip meals.

Diabetes can affect people of all ages. If someone in your family has diabetes, your risk for the disease may be increased. Find more information about diabetes from the American Diabetes Association, National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse, and the National Diabetes Education Program.