

# YOUR HEALTH & WELL BEING



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## Diabetes: What Is It?

More than 100 million people around the world have diabetes mellitus. Of the 16 million people in the United States who have diabetes, about a third of those have not been diagnosed. Diabetes is a complex metabolic disorder of body chemistry, but it can be managed. Because certain symptoms of diabetes can mimic other health problems, and because medical treatments for other diseases or traumas often need to be tailored for a diabetic's special needs, it's a good idea for diabetic patients to carry medical identification, such as a medic alert bracelet or wallet card, at all times.

### WHAT IS DIABETES?

Normally, the body breaks down the components of foods (carbohydrates, fats and proteins) into glucose (sugar), which the body then uses as an energy supply. Insulin is the hormone responsible for bringing glucose through the blood stream into the cells where it is converted into energy. In a person with diabetes, insulin is either under-produced, or the body's fat and muscle cells don't let the insulin bring glucose into the cells (insulin resistance). Either way, too much glucose stays in the blood, robbing the body of an important energy source and causing high blood-glucose levels. These high blood-glucose levels can lead to serious complications.



The two types of diabetes are:

**Type 1 diabetes** is thought to be an autoimmune disorder where the body attacks the insulin-producing cells found in the pancreas. Also known as Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus (IDDM), Type 1 diabetes usually develops during childhood or young adulthood, but it can develop at any age. With this form of diabetes, the body cannot produce any insulin and must rely on insulin medication.

**Type 2 diabetes** (NIDDM), or Non-Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus, usually develops in people over 40 years of age. Type 2 is strongly associated with obesity. This form of diabetes usually takes longer to develop. Over time, the body is less able to produce insulin or not use it properly. Diet, exercise, and frequently medications (both insulin and pills) are included in the treatment plan for Type 2 diabetes.

### WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR DIABETES?

If you have two or more of the following risk factors, you are at increased risk for developing Type 2 (NIDDM) diabetes:

- Age 45 or older
- A family history of diabetes (parents or siblings with diabetes)
- Obesity
- Habitual physical inactivity
- Race/ethnicity: African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, and Pacific Islanders
- Hypertension (high blood pressure at or over 140/90 mm Hg in adults)
- HDL cholesterol at or below 35 mg/dl and/or triglyceride levels at or over 250 mg/dl
- Polycystic ovary syndrome

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### Did You Know?

Did you know that on myCIGNA.com you can compare prescription drugs based upon side effects, cost and lifestyle consideration? You can also look up over 11,000 generic and brand name drugs and check for drug interactions.

## DIABETES: WHAT IS IT?

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- Gestational diabetes mellitus (high blood sugar/diabetes brought on by pregnancy)
- Delivery of a baby over nine pounds
- Previously identified abnormal blood glucose levels (IGT: Impaired Glucose Tolerance, or IFT: Impaired Fasting Tolerance)

If you have any of the risk factors for diabetes, you should inform your doctor who may recommend annual monitoring of your blood sugar levels. Early diagnosis and treatment of diabetes is important to prevent serious complications.

### *Did You Know?*

Did you know that pre-diabetes occurs when your blood glucose (sugar) levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to indicate diabetes? If you have pre-diabetes, two simple steps can help delay or prevent diabetes. If you're overweight, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends that you lose 5 to 10 percent of your weight. Cutting fat and calories and walking for at least 30 minutes a day also may help you bring your blood glucose level back to normal.

# It's About Your Time

Online support from CIGNA HealthCare makes managing your benefits easier.



### **Make the most of the time you spend planning, managing and understanding your health benefits.**

Around-the-clock availability, instant access to your benefits information and a wide variety of healthy-living guidelines are all at your fingertips. In one place. With one visit. It's myCIGNA.com from CIGNA HealthCare.

And now, through myCIGNA.com, most members can access tools designed to help you be more informed when talking with your doctor about your treatment options.

### **DrugCompare™**

Learn about and compare drug treatment options for more than 50 common conditions. Up to 10 medications can be compared at once for features such as side effects, cost and drug interactions.

### **Select Quality Care™ Hospital Comparison Tool**

Based on your needs and preferences, compare hospitals for specific illnesses or procedures. You also can print out a personalized report or e-mail it to your physician.

### **HealthQuotient™ Health Risk Assessment**

This questionnaire can help you identify and monitor your health status, find out how your family health history may affect you, learn about preventive care and check your progress toward healthy goals. If your results show that you may benefit from other services, you can learn about related CIGNA HealthCare programs on the same site.

Choose CIGNA HealthCare and take advantage of the convenience of **myCIGNA.com**. Isn't it about time for you? CIGNA HealthCare members can register today at [www.cigna.com](http://www.cigna.com).

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