

Diagnosing Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic condition that affects the body's ability to use the energy found in food. The American Diabetes Association reports that 30.3 million Americans have diabetes. Shockingly, nearly 7.2 million Americans don't even know that they have it.

Normally, the body is able to break down sugars and carbohydrates and turn them into glucose, fueling the body. However, insulin is needed to turn the glucose into energy. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disorder in which the immune system mistakenly treats the cells in your pancreas that make insulin as invaders and destroys them. Type 2 diabetes is when your body does not or can not use insulin properly or is insulin-resistant.

Diagnosis of diabetes is imperative to your future health because if left untreated, it can lead to problems with the heart, blood vessels, eyes, and kidneys. Risk factors of developing the condition include family history, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, and an unhealthy diet.

Since symptoms of diabetes can take months or sometimes years to be detected, WellLiving recommends an annual visit to your family physician, who will decide if you need a blood sugar level screening. Common treatments for diabetes include insulin injections to manage type 1 diabetes, diet and lifestyle changes to treat type 2 diabetes, or sometimes, a combination of both.



The Screenings and the Numbers

Here are screenings your physician may use to measure your blood glucose levels.

The **A1C** test measures your average blood glucose levels for the past 2 to 3 months. Your doctor may administer this test more than once per year. Those testing 6.5% or more are considered diabetic.

Fasting Plasma Glucose (FPG) is a test that checks fasting (not eating for at least 8 hours) blood glucose levels. Those with fasting blood glucose levels of 126 mg/dl or higher, are considered diabetic.

An **Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT)** checks blood glucose levels before and after drinking a sweetened drink. Diabetes is diagnosed at 2 hour blood glucose of greater than or equal to 200 mg/dl.



SOURCES: American Diabetes Association, WebMD