

# 7 signs you may have diabetes



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Diabetes is when someone has a problem with insulin and too much sugar stays in their bloodstream. About a third of seniors aged 65 and older are impacted by diabetes.<sup>1</sup> While those statistics may seem alarming, if you spot the warning signs early, you can take proactive steps to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes with lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, eating healthy food and staying active.<sup>2</sup>

## Types of diabetes<sup>3</sup>

There are 3 types of diabetes. Type 1 is an autoimmune reaction. The vast majority of people with diabetes have type 2, which develops over several years. It occurs when the body can't keep blood sugar (glucose) at normal levels. Gestational diabetes develops in pregnant women who have never had diabetes and usually disappears after the baby is born.

## Warning signs of diabetes

Symptoms of diabetes are different for each person. Because some people experience mild symptoms, diabetes may not be diagnosed right away. Knowing the symptoms in advance may help avoid complications from diabetes, including heart or kidney disease, nerve damage and other problems with feet, oral health, vision, hearing and mental health.<sup>4</sup>

Here's a list of warning signs of diabetes:<sup>5</sup>

1. **Feeling thirsty with frequent urge to urinate.** The high sugar levels with diabetes causes people to feel thirsty more often and urinate more frequently.
2. **Extreme fatigue.** When blood sugar levels are high, it's harder for the body to convert glucose into energy. Fatigue may also be caused by diabetes-related dehydration.
3. **Very dry skin or sores that heal slowly.** High blood sugar disrupts circulation, which may cause dry skin and slow healing for cuts and bruises.
4. **Dizziness or fainting.** When blood sugar levels plummet, people may feel weak and dizzy, causing shakiness and fainting.
5. **Numbness or tingling in hands or feet.** About half of people with diabetes experience nerve damage or peripheral neuropathy, which causes tingling, numbness or pain in hands and feet.
6. **Blurry vision.** High blood sugar damages the blood vessels of the eye which can lead to blurry vision.<sup>6</sup>



## Getting tested: What to expect<sup>7</sup>

Tell your healthcare provider if you're experiencing any of the warning signs. They will likely use 1 or more of the following tests to screen for diabetes:

- **A1C test**—Measures the average blood sugar levels over 2 or 3 months.
- **Oral glucose tolerance test**—Blood sugar is measured before and 2 hours after you drink a sugar-containing liquid to see how your body responds to sugar.
- **Fasting plasma sugar test**—Blood is tested after fasting for at least 8 hours. There is also a random plasma sugar test, which can be given at any time of day without the need for fasting.

If the tests result in a diabetes diagnosis, your doctor will create a comprehensive diabetes management plan. With advancements in diabetes treatments, patients can lead healthy, active and enjoyable lives.

Consult your doctor before beginning any new diet or exercise regimen.

This information is provided for educational purposes only. It is not to be used for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

**Sources:**

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2. "What is Diabetes?" Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last accessed April 14, 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/diabetes.html>.
3. "What is Diabetes?"
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5. "What Are 10 Warning Signs of Diabetes in Older Adults?"
6. "Diabetes and Vision Loss," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last accessed June 26, <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/diabetes-vision-loss.html>.
7. "What Are 10 Warning Signs of Diabetes in Older Adults?"