


Diabetes Awareness Month

November is Diabetes Awareness Month. Diabetes is a chronic condition resulting from the body not producing or properly using insulin. Insulin is a hormone that works to convert sugar, starches and other food into the energy needed for life's daily activities. Diabetes can often go undiagnosed due to the symptoms not being very specific or due to having no symptoms at all. Symptoms may include frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme hunger, unusual weight loss, increased fatigue, irritability and blurry vision. High blood sugar damages the body and leads to other health complications, such as heart disease, kidney disease, nerve damage and vision loss. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, talk with your primary care provider about being screened.

The good news is that prediabetes and type 2 diabetes are largely preventable by adopting a healthy lifestyle. Research shows that you can significantly lower your risk for type 2 diabetes by losing 7% of your body weight and exercising moderately (such as brisk walking) for 30 minutes a day, five days a week ([Source: ADA](#)). If you are overweight and have prediabetes, losing 5% of your weight can help reverse prediabetes. If you are unable to lose weight, you may be able to lower your blood glucose by eating well and being active. ([Source: CDC](#))

Participate in the following activities to learn more:



#1 Watch [Move with a Doc: How to Avoid Type 2 Diabetes](#)
(You're encouraged to move while you listen!)

#2 Types of Diabetes

#3 Role of Carbohydrates

Over their lifetime, US adults have a 40% chance of developing type 2 diabetes.

If you're a Hispanic or Latino adult, your chance is more than 50%, and you're likely to develop it at a younger age. Hispanic or Latino people also have higher rates of kidney failure, vision loss and blindness caused by diabetes.

Source: [CDC](#)

Questions? Email wellness@wellfirstbenefits.com



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Activity 2: Types of Diabetes

Test your knowledge of the different types of diabetes. For each statement, select the type of diabetes that applies. (Hint: The statement may apply to more than one type.) *The answer key is on page 4.*

	Pre-Diabetes	Type 1 Diabetes	Type 2 Diabetes	Gestational Diabetes
1. Occurs when cells in the body fail to respond to insulin. Over time, the disease progresses, and the body produces less and less insulin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Develops during pregnancy in women who often have no history of diabetes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Symptoms often take years to develop, and sometimes there are no symptoms at all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Autoimmune condition when the body fails to produce any insulin at all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. A1C test results between 5.7-6.4% or a fasting blood sugar level of 100-125mg/dL.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Usually goes away after the baby is born. But women and their children are at greater risk for diabetes later in life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Can be prevented or delayed through lifestyle changes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Often has no symptoms and is discovered through a blood glucose test.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Often begins during childhood or adolescence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. A1C test result of 6.5% or higher or a fasting blood sugar level of 126 mg/dL or higher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. A condition that increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Risk factors include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overweight • 45 years or older • Physically active less than 3x per week • Family history of type 2 diabetes • African Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, American Indians, Pacific Islanders and some Asian Americans are at higher risk. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Talk with your primary care provider about ways to prevent Type 2 diabetes or control your diabetes. There is no one size fits all treatment; how your health is managed depends on the type of diabetes you have. Some can control their blood glucose levels by eating healthy and exercising, while others may need medication or insulin to manage. But connecting with the right care team is always the first step to effectively managing your diabetes.

Activity 3: Role of Carbohydrates

Your body needs carbohydrates (carbs) to help preserve muscle and to give you the energy you need for your daily mental and physical tasks, but carefully choosing which ones to consume can help to prevent diabetes or aid in managing diabetes. When you hear the word carbs, you most likely think of foods such as baked goods (e.g., pies, cakes, cookies), white bread, and pasta. But did you know that there are different types of carbohydrates, some of which are naturally occurring. You can find carbs in whole fruits and vegetables, while others are processed and refined, lacking or stripped of their nutrients.

The three types of carbohydrates (carbs) are:





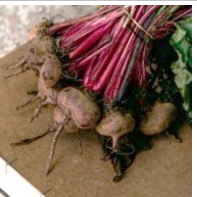





- **Sugars or simple carbs:** Natural sugars found in fruit and milk, or the added sugars found in soda and other packaged foods.
- **Starches or complex carbs:** Includes wheat, oats and other grains; starchy vegetables such as corn and potatoes; and dried beans, lentils and peas.
- **Fiber:** The part of plant foods that are not digested, but help you stay healthy.

More about carbohydrates:

- Sugars and starches raise your blood sugar, but fiber does not—it does not get broken down into glucose.
- Carbs are measured in grams. One carb serving is about 15 grams of carbs—this is not always the same as what you think of as a serving of food. For example, most people would count a small baked potato as one serving, but at about 30g of carbs, it counts as two carb servings. (Source: [CDC](#))

Guessing Game:

Which of the following foods contain **zero** carbohydrates? Check the box next to each item below that you think is a zero-carb item. *The answer key is on page 5.*

 <input type="checkbox"/> Cashews	 <input type="checkbox"/> Goat cheese	 <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar-free ice cream	 <input type="checkbox"/> Chickpeas	 <input type="checkbox"/> Beets
 <input type="checkbox"/> Balsamic vinegar	 <input type="checkbox"/> Low-carb tortilla wraps	 <input type="checkbox"/> Spaghetti sauce	 <input type="checkbox"/> Fat-free ranch dressing	 <input type="checkbox"/> Olive oil

Answer Keys

Activity 2: Types of Diabetes – Answer Key

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Activity 3: Guessing Game – Answer Key

Olive oil and goat cheese—these are the only two items from the list that contain zero carbohydrates.

This activity is meant to show us that many everyday foods on the market contain hidden carbs. During processing, sugars are added to many foods—**added sugars = added carbs**. Also, foods like beans (e.g., chickpeas), root vegetables (e.g., beets) and nuts (e.g., cashews), while all considered healthy, they contain carbs or higher amounts of carbs than their counterparts. So, if you are trying to lower your carb count, it's good to be mindful of what you're eating.

Examples:

- Cashews have 9 grams of carbs per ounce, while almonds have 6, and pecans have under 4.
- Protein-rich beans (e.g., black beans, chickpeas) fall into the same category as beef, chicken, and eggs, which tricks you into thinking they are low-carb. A ¼ cup of chickpeas has 30 grams of carbs.
- Most people think carb-free when it comes to vegetables, but starchy root veggies (e.g., beets, carrots) are an exception. Beets have about 13 grams of carbs per cup.

Remember:

- If you have diabetes, talk with your primary provider/care team to create an eating plan that is right for you. There is no one size fits all treatment for diabetes. Some people can control their blood glucose levels by eating healthy and exercising, while others may need medication or insulin.
- Just because a food or drink product contains carbs does not necessarily mean it is bad for you. When shopping for food items, look at the total carbs, sugars and ingredients found on the Nutrition Facts label. Using the Nutrition Facts label can help you compare items and make healthier choices. For help understanding the Nutrition Facts label, refer to activity 2 in the [National Nutrition Month Preventive Health Toolkit](#).

Resources

Learn more about diabetes prevention and living with diabetes with these SSM Health and community resources:

SSM Health resources:

- [Diabetes](#)
- [Nutrition Services](#) (see Diabetes Management Support section)

Community resources:

- [CDC: Diabetes](#)
- [CDC: Prevent Type 2 Diabetes](#)
- [American Diabetes Association](#)