

I'm Debbie Edelen. I am an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner. I work at the North Garrard Family Medical Center, and I've been a Nurse Practitioner for 20 years, and I've been with Ephraim McDowell at the North Garrett clinic for the last three years.

Unfortunately, in Kentucky, diabetes is considered an epidemic. We have at least 14% of our patient population, of our adult population in Kentucky with diabetes. And we have 35% of our adult population with pre-diabetes. So, we have nearly 50% of the adult population in the state of Kentucky that either has diabetes or pre-diabetes. That leads to lots of health problems and complications. It also is very costly. It's been estimated that over \$14 billion each year in Kentucky is lost due to the cost of healthcare for diabetes and lost productivity.

Being obese or overweight is one of the main risk factors for the development of diabetes. Increasing age increases the risk of diabetes as well, being inactive or sedentary, not exercising, having a parent, or a brother, or a sister that's had diabetes significantly increases your risk for diabetes as well. African-Americans, Asians, American Indians, and Hispanic individuals do have a higher risk for developing diabetes as well. Women who have had gestational diabetes, the diabetes that can occur during pregnancy are also at an increased risk for the development of diabetes later in life. Having high blood pressure, a blood pressure greater than 140 over 90 does increase your risk of diabetes also, and having abnormal cholesterol levels. Many of the risk factors that we can't control, our age, our family history, we can fight against by controlling those other risk factors that we can.

There are three different types of diabetes: type I diabetes, type II diabetes, and gestational diabetes. Type I diabetes generally occurs more often in children and adolescents, but it can occur at any age. Type II diabetes is the most common form of diabetes, and it accounts for about 90% of all the cases of diabetes in the United States. And type II diabetes, it occurs more often in adults, but it is becoming more common in children and adolescents. Gestational diabetes is the type of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy.

Through blood test, generally fasting blood sugars. Your healthcare provider will ask you to come fasting for a blood test, generally. But they do a blood test to check a blood sugar level. And two blood sugar readings greater than 125 on two different occasions is diagnostic for diabetes.

Type I diabetes is generally either multiple shots daily or a insulin pump. Treatment for type II diabetes is a little different. Some people with type II diabetes will need insulin injections. However, the majority of them won't need insulin injections on a daily basis. There are multiple pills. And generally, when you're diagnosed with diabetes, most people start taking one of many different pills that are used to treat diabetes.

Side effect depends on the type of medication and how that medication works. For example, some diabetes medications specifically lower the blood sugar. And so, some people may experience low blood sugar reactions. Other side effects can include a little nausea, a little upset stomach, some tingling, or unusual sensations. Some of them need us to monitor liver function test and kidney function tests because they work on those systems as well.

People with type I diabetes will require insulin their entire lives. People with type II diabetes may or may not require medicines their entire lives.

Cardiovascular disease, which can lead to heart attack and stroke is a very significant risk factor of diabetes. Neuropathy, which is damage to the nerve cells is another very significant complication of diabetes. But in the worst case scenario, people actually lose all sensation in their feet or in their hands. And you have also heard of people say, "My uncle had his foot amputated because of diabetes." Generally, that occurs because the loss of sensation in a foot results in damage to the foot that's not known to the patient. Nephropathy, which is kidney damage, can also occur as a complication of diabetes.

Initially, when someone is diagnosed with diabetes, your healthcare provider may want to see you every few weeks or every couple of months to see how you're doing with the medications that have been prescribed, how you're doing with your weight and your exercise, and how you're doing with controlling your blood sugar levels. After the blood sugar becomes better controlled, generally, your healthcare provider will want to see you about every three to six months.

Some of the warning signs of diabetes include excessive hunger, excessive thirst, and excessive urination. In addition, a lot of people feel very fatigued, and they don't understand why. Some people are losing weight, and they're not trying to lose weight. So, that seems very unusual. Some people are experiencing frequent infections, such as urinary tract infections or yeast infections. Some people notice that they have a wound or a sore, and it just doesn't seem to be healing well. It's taking too long to heal or not healing completely. And then, some people began experiencing the numbness, or tingling, or pins and needles sensation in their hands or their feet. And that's, again, related to the elevated blood sugar.

But symptoms of suddenly feeling lightheaded or dizzy, breaking out in a sweat, feeling nauseated, feeling shaky and weak, those can be symptoms that your blood sugar is dropping too low.

According to the American Diabetic Association, they now recommend that people with diabetes find a diet that is a healthy diet that works for them and use that. Currently, their recommendation is the diabetes plate method. And that involves considering your dinner plate and taking your dinner plate and cutting into half. And on this half of your dinner plate, you fill it up with non-starchy vegetables. Then, a quarter of your dinner plate, you fill up with lean proteins. So, that's lean chicken or fish, even lean beef or poultry is good. The last quarter of your dinner plate, you fill up with starchy vegetables and fruits. And then, you have some non-caloric beverage to drink, either water or something else without sugar or sweetener in it. Their recommendation is if you eat this way for most of your meals, that is a healthy diet, and it's easy. The other thing they do recommend is that you learn basic label reading. Physical activity is also very important. It's recommended that you get at least 30 minutes of physical activity at least five days per week.

And here's the good news. People who are able to make lifestyle changes, meaning they make some dietary changes to eat a healthy diet, they begin exercising to burn some calories and burn up some of that blood sugar, and they lose weight if they need to and maintain a healthy weight, I've actually had a few people, over the years, be able to completely clear out their diagnosis of diabetes by making lifestyle changes.