



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Detecting Diabetes

National Diabetes Month—November 2017

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[Announcer] *This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Kathleen Dooling] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Kathleen Dooling.

Diabetes is a common chronic disease in the U.S., and over the past 20 years, the number of adults with diabetes has more than tripled.

Nilka Rios Burrows is with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of early diagnosis and treatment of diabetes. Welcome to the show, Nilka.

[Ms. Burrows] Thank you.

[Dr. Dooling] Nilka, what is diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] Diabetes is a disease in which blood sugar levels are above normal. The two main types of diabetes are Type 1 and Type 2. In Type 1 diabetes, your body does not produce enough insulin. This type of diabetes cannot be prevented. In Type 2 diabetes, the most common type, your body does not use insulin properly. One other form of diabetes is gestational diabetes, when the blood sugar levels become high during pregnancy. This goes away after pregnancy but increases the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes later in life.

[Dr. Dooling] How many people in the U.S. have diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] An estimated 30 million people have diabetes, including seven million adults who do not know they have it. That is, about one in four adults with diabetes are not aware of their condition. This is why it's so very important to raise awareness about diabetes. Diabetes can cause serious health complications, including heart disease and stroke, blindness, kidney failure, and amputations, and is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.

[Dr. Dooling] What are the most common symptoms of diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] Many people with diabetes do not show any symptoms, but if they do, it might be frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme hunger, blurred vision, tingling or numbness in the hands or feet, feeling very tired much of the time, and perhaps having sores that are slow to heal. If you're age 45 or older, talk to your doctor about getting tested for diabetes.

[Dr. Dooling] How is diabetes treated?

[Ms. Burrows] Diabetes can be treated and managed by healthful eating, regular physical activity, and medications to lower blood sugar levels. People with Type 1 diabetes must have insulin to survive. Insulin also may be used to control blood sugar levels in people with Type 2 diabetes. In addition to controlling blood sugar levels, many people with diabetes need to take medications to lower their blood pressure and cholesterol levels to reduce the risk for heart disease and stroke.

[Dr. Dooling] How can we prevent diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] Type 2 diabetes can be prevented, particularly in those who have what we call pre-diabetes. People with pre-diabetes have blood sugar levels that are elevated but not yet high enough to be diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. In these people, Type 2 diabetes can be prevented by doing two things—eating healthier and increasing physical activity. Leading a healthier lifestyle goes a long way in preventing Type 2 diabetes.

[Dr. Dooling] Where can listeners get more information about diabetes?

[Ms. Burrows] Listeners can go to cdc.gov/diabetes. On this website, you can find the mini-series, “Your Health” with Joan Lunden and CDC, which provides information about diabetes prevention and control.

[Dr. Dooling] Thanks, Nilka. I’ve been talking today with Nilka Rios Burrows about the importance of early detection and treatment of diabetes.

Regular checkups can determine if you have or are at risk for diabetes, and early detection can help prevent the serious health problems associated with this condition.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Kathleen Dooling for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.