



DIABETES SAMPLE NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. behind heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lower respiratory diseases, and accidents (unintentional injuries). Today an estimated 23.6 million people are currently living with diabetes, and of those, the American Diabetes Association estimates that 5.7 million Americans are unaware that they have the disease.

Diabetes symptoms can often be difficult to detect. Many patients go undiagnosed simply because the symptoms they experience don't seem serious at the time. Some symptoms to look for include: frequent urination, excessive thirst, unexplained weight loss, extreme hunger, sudden vision changes, tingling or numbness in hands or feet, fatigue, dry skin, and more infections than usual.

If a person suspects they may have diabetes, they should visit their physician or local community health center to be tested for the disease. There are three tests that screen for diabetes. A fasting plasma glucose (FPG) test measures blood glucose in a person who has not eaten anything for at least 8 hours. An oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) measures blood glucose after a person fasts at least 8 hours and 2 hours after the person drinks a glucose-containing beverage. Both the FPG and OGTT tests are used to diagnose diabetes and pre-diabetes. A random plasma glucose test (RPGT) measures blood glucose and does not require a patient to fast before the test is administered. This test is used to diagnose diabetes only.

Patients who have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes can control their blood glucose by eating healthy, creating an exercise program, losing excess weight, and taking oral medications. People who have type 1 diabetes don't make insulin. For these patients, injecting insulin is the only way they can help keep their blood glucose levels down.

Below are several ways that diabetes patients can reduce their risks of health complications:

- Monitor your blood sugar regularly. Glucometers are available at your local pharmacies and are very easy to use. Use it to monitor how the food you eat affects your blood sugar and report the results to your doctor.
- Gather all of the information you can about diabetes from your doctor and from all of the various resources available on the Internet at home or at your local library. Develop a plan with your doctor to control your blood sugar through diet control, oral medications, injectable insulin, or a combination of these treatments.
- Learn to listen to the ways your body tells you if your blood sugar is too high or too low. Your body will tell you if you are under control.
- Communicate with your doctor, your co-workers, and your family or friends about your diabetes. They will support and encourage you with your diabetes management.

I would like to urge my constituents to adopt healthy lifestyles to reduce their risks of developing this disease. If you or someone you know is affected by diabetes, please contact my office for more information at {phone number} or visit my website at {website}.