



May 12, 2003
National Women's Check-Up Day

More Information About *Diabetes*

Diabetes is a dangerous disease that is often not taken seriously. People suffering from diabetes have high levels of blood sugar, which, if ignored, can lead to grave consequences such as heart attack, stroke, blindness, limb amputation, kidney failure, and even death.

An estimated 17 million Americans have diabetes but only 11.1 million cases are diagnosed. 9.1 million women have diabetes, and about a third don't know it. Women increase their risk for diabetes with older age, being overweight/obese, physical inactivity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, having a sibling or parent with diabetes, giving birth to a baby weighing 9 pounds, and having diabetes while pregnant. African American, Native American/Alaska Native, and Hispanic American/Latina women are at a higher risk for diabetes.

There are three forms of diabetes:

- ❖ Type 1 Diabetes - when the body does not produce any insulin.
- ❖ Type 2 Diabetes - When the body does not make enough insulin or use insulin well. Most people with diabetes have type 2.
- ❖ Gestational Diabetes - Diabetes that develops during pregnancy.

What Are the Warning Signs?

There are several warning signs of diabetes that women should watch out for. These include going to the bathroom a lot, feeling hungry or thirsty all the time, blurred vision, weight loss without trying, cuts/bruises that are slow to heal, feeling tired all the time, very dry skin, and tingling/numbness in hands or feet.

Managing Diabetes...

Diabetes is a disease that can be managed through regular care. Taking care of diabetes every day can help prevent other health problems that diabetes may cause, such as problems in the eyes, kidneys, nerves, gums and teeth, feet, legs, blood vessels, and heart. Following are some steps that women can take to control diabetes:

- ❖ Eat healthy foods.
- ❖ Exercise (30 minutes most days of the week is best). Exercise helps the body's insulin work better.
- ❖ Take your medicine. Sometimes people with diabetes need to take pills or insulin shots. Patients should follow directions and talk to their health care providers about the medicine's side effects.
- ❖ Check your blood sugar (ask your health care provider how often you should check it).
- ❖ See your health care providers regularly. Don't forget about the dentist and eye doctor!
- ❖ Don't smoke.
- ❖ Control your blood sugar and cholesterol levels, your blood pressure, and your weight.
- ❖ Check your feet everyday for blisters, red spots, swelling, or cuts.
- ❖ Stay aware of how you feel-if you notice a problem, call your health care provider right away.

