

Video transcript: Diabetes Intro

Approximate time: 9:57

Welcome to the UnitedHealthcare Diabetes Education Online Seminar. This seminar is called “An overview of diabetes.”

[Slide: What to expect]

Whether you or a family member have just been diagnosed with diabetes or have been living with diabetes for years, you may find it helpful to learn some basic information about the condition. This overview will share general information about type 1 and type 2 diabetes, including some of the causes and symptoms of each type, as well as information about managing diabetes.

[Slide: What is diabetes?]

What is diabetes? Diabetes is a condition in which a person’s blood glucose is too high. Blood glucose is the same thing as blood sugar. Everyone’s blood needs some glucose or sugar. It gives the body energy to keep going. But when it gets too high, it can cause problems.

Glucose comes from the food we eat. The pancreas produces insulin which helps glucose get into cells. This process helps create the energy that fuels our body. With type 1 diabetes, blood sugar gets too high because the body doesn’t make enough insulin or doesn’t make any insulin at all. With type 2 diabetes, blood sugar gets too high because the body doesn’t use the insulin the way it should.

[Slide: Common symptoms]

Symptoms for diabetes can vary. Symptoms for type 1 diabetes can develop in just a few weeks or over months, and they can be severe. Some of the more common symptoms for type 1 diabetes may include: frequent urination, extreme thirst or hunger, extreme fatigue or feeling very tired, blurry vision, cuts or bruises that heal slowly, unexplained weight loss, nausea and vomiting and stomach pains.

Many people with type 2 diabetes have no symptoms. But when they do occur, they may include frequent urination, extreme hunger or thirst, fatigue or feeling very tired, blurry vision, cuts or bruises that heal slowly, unexpected weight loss or numbness or tingling in your hands or feet.

[Slide: Diagnosis and testing]

Generally, a diabetes diagnosis requires blood testing to confirm. A fasting blood glucose test is used to measure blood sugar and can help determine whether you have

or are at risk for diabetes. If your blood sugar level suggests diabetes, your doctor may repeat the test to confirm the results.

There are three other tests used to diagnose diabetes. The A1C test, the oral glucose tolerance test and the random plasma glucose test. The A1C test measures your average blood glucose level over the past two or three months. This test does not require fasting. The oral glucose tolerance test is taken over a two-hour time period and gives your doctor an idea of how your body processes glucose. The random glucose test is a blood test that can be done at any time of day. It is typically used when there are severe diabetic symptoms.

There are additional tests to help diagnose type 1 diabetes. These include: blood tests for autoantibodies to determine if the body is attacking itself, and a urine test to determine ketone levels.

[Slide: Type 1 diabetes]

What causes diabetes? Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease. An autoimmune disease means the body's immune system mistakes another part of the body as being harmful and attacks it. In type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells in the pancreas that make insulin. This prevents the pancreas from making enough insulin or from making any insulin at all.

Possible causes of type 1 diabetes include: genetic factors, environmental factors and possibly viruses. Only about 5% of people in the United States with diabetes have type 1.

Type 1 diabetes most commonly develops in children, though adults can develop it to. Without insulin treatment, blood sugar levels will become too high. In the short term, a life-threatening condition called diabetic ketoacidosis can occur. In the long term, serious health problems, such as heart or kidney disease can also occur.

[Slide: Type 2 diabetes]

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. Age, lifestyle and genetic traits can put people at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Some of these risk factors include being 45 or older, not being physically active, being overweight, having a close family member with diabetes, given birth to a baby who weighed over 9 pounds, had gestational diabetes or are of certain ethnicities.

[Slide: Type 2 diabetes]

With type 2 diabetes, the body is resistant to insulin. This means it doesn't use the insulin as it should. The pancreas will make extra insulin to try to keep the blood sugar under control. But eventually the pancreas can't keep up and the blood sugar level becomes too high. You can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes with lifestyle changes such as diet, exercise and weight loss. Consistently high blood sugar levels can lead to heart or kidney disease, vision loss or blindness, nerve damage and other problems.

[Slide: Managing diabetes]

Both types of diabetes can be managed, allowing you to live a healthy life and prevent or delay some of the complications that result from diabetes. Your goal is to keep your

blood sugar level within the target range given to you by your doctor. You can do this by eating a healthy diet, getting physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight and taking medications as directed by your doctor.

Most likely, you will need to test your blood sugar regularly to make sure you're meeting your goal. Ask your doctor how often you should test your blood sugar, and be sure to ask how to use your testing equipment so your results will be accurate. It's also important to see your doctor regularly. Your doctor is a key part of helping you manage your diabetes and to make adjustments to medications and diet as things change or the disease progresses. Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program or making changes to your lifestyle or health care routine.

[Slide: Know your ABCs of diabetes]

Diabetes can cause many serious health risks, such as stroke, kidney disease, high blood pressure and more. Keeping your diabetes ABCs close to your target can help prevent or delay some of these complications. Your doctor can tell you what your targets should be.

Here are your diabetes ABCs. A is for your A1C level. This shows how well your blood sugar has been controlled over the past two or three months. B is for blood pressure. People with diabetes are at risk for high blood pressure which increases the risk of heart attack or stroke. C is for cholesterol. In particular, your LDL cholesterol. High LDL can also increase the risk of stroke or other heart conditions.

[Slide: Your diabetes care team]

A diabetes care team can help you maintain a healthy blood sugar balance and a healthful lifestyle. This care team can include your regular doctor, eye doctor, foot doctor, nurse who is often a diabetes specialist, dietician and other specialists to manage cardiovascular risks and other conditions.

All parts of your care plan work together to help you meet your diabetes goals. Even if you take medication, you'll need to eat right and exercise. Pay attention to other aspects of your lifestyle too. Don't smoke, limit alcohol, take care of your dental and mental health and remember that managing diabetes takes work. But if you make healthy choices and take care of yourself, you can manage the condition.

[Slide: Last slide]

Thank you for watching. We hope you found this information helpful. To learn more about diabetes or to hear personal stories, visit the UnitedHealthcare Health Library at www.healthlibrary.uhc.com. From the homepage you can click on "health topics" and then "diabetes", where you'll find information, articles and videos to help you learn and live with diabetes.