KNOW YOUR RISK FOR DIABETES

Type 2 diabetes is a metabolic disorder that accounts for 90-95% of all diabetes cases. The incidence of type 2 diabetes is rising along with obesity rates and the tendency towards a sedentary lifestyle. Read below to find out which risk factors affect you and talk to your doctor if you're at risk.

Obesity is the single most important risk factor for type 2 diabetes. The more overweight you are, the more resistant your body is to insulin. About 80% of those with type 2 diabetes are overweight. A healthy, low-fat diet and regular exercise can help you lose weight gradually and keep it off.

Age
The risk for type 2 diabetes increases with age, especially after age 45. Although you can't change your age, you can work on other risk factors to reduce your risk.

Family history
You can't change your family history but it is important for you and your doctor to know if diabetes runs in your family. Your risk for diabetes is higher if your mother, father or sibling has diabetes. Tell your doctor if anyone in your family has diabetes.
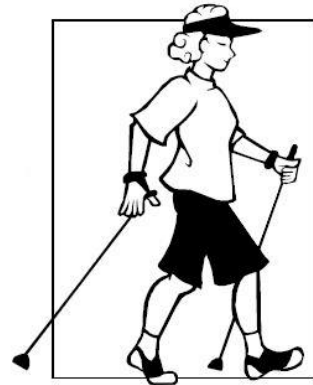
Race/ethnic background
For reasons still unclear to doctors, some ethnic groups have a higher risk of diabetes than others. You are at greater risk if you belong to one of these groups:
- Native American
- Hispanic American
- African American
- Pacific Islander

Exercise
Exercising and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce your risk of diabetes. Any amount of activity is better than none, but try to exercise for 30 to 60 minutes most days of the week. If you haven't exercised in a while or you have health problems, talk with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Diet
A diet high in fat, calories and cholesterol increases your risk of diabetes. In addition, a poor diet can lead to obesity (another risk factor for diabetes) and other health problems. A healthy diet is high in fiber and low in fat, cholesterol, salt and sugar. Also, remember to watch your portion size—how much you eat is just as important as what you eat.