



## Diabetes must be taken seriously

### My wife was just diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. How serious of a condition is it?

As the American Diabetes Association (ADA) states, diabetes “is not merely a condition. It is a disease with deadly consequences.”

Type 2 diabetes means the pancreas still produces insulin, but either it doesn’t produce enough or the body can’t use it effectively. (Type 1 diabetes means the pancreas no longer makes insulin.) Insulin is what allows the body’s cells to uptake and use the glucose that flows through the bloodstream after you eat something.

Some people are fooled into a false comfort zone when they get a diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes and are told to lose weight and get more exercise — after all, most of us should be doing those things. But those are crucial control measures for people with diabetes. Both weight loss and regular exercise help the body’s cells become more efficient in taking up insulin. Medication also helps, but it’s best to do what you can to get the body to use insulin properly without medication if possible.

The key is to keep blood glucose levels as normal as possible. Too much glucose running through the bloodstream damages nerves and small blood vessels. According to the ADA, about 60 percent to 70 percent of people with diabetes have mild to severe forms of nerve damage that could result in pain in the feet or hands, slowed digestion, sexual dysfunction, and other nerve problems. In addition, diabetes is the leading

cause of kidney failure and new cases of blindness among adults, and the rate of amputation for people with diabetes is 10 times higher than for people without diabetes.

The ADA estimates that nearly 24 million Americans have diabetes, although nearly one-quarter of them haven’t been diagnosed. Though not always evident in Type 2 diabetes, some common warning signs include blurred vision, extreme hunger, unusual weight loss, fatigue, tingling or numbness in the hands or feet, extreme thirst, and frequent urination. The frequent urination is the body’s way of getting rid of excessive glucose; the thirst is its way to replace the fluids lost by frequent urination.

Health professionals can use several different tests to measure blood glucose levels to officially diagnose diabetes. Because warning signs are so often not evident, the National Institutes of Health recommend that anyone 45 or older should consider getting tested for diabetes. People younger than age 45 should likewise consider testing if they are overweight and have another risk factor, such as being inactive or having a relative with diabetes. For more risk factors and other information, see the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse website at <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov/dm/pubs/diagnosis>.

*Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or [filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu).*



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

---

For the week of  
Oct. 31, 2010

---

By Martha Filipic

614-292-9833

[filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu)

---

**Editor:**

November is American Diabetes Month. This column was reviewed by Shelby Sutphen, dietetic intern in the Department of Human Nutrition in the College of Education and Human Ecology.

---

**Section of Communications and Technology**

**News and Media Relations**

2021 Coffey Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1044  
614-292-2011

208 Research Services  
Building  
1680 Madison Ave.  
Wooster, OH 44691-4096  
330-263-3780

Ohio State University Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with United States Civil Rights Laws and the USDA. *Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension*  
TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868