

ASK THE DOCTOR



(NAPSA)—These frequently asked questions about diabetes, a disease afflicting almost 16 million Americans, are answered by Dr. Paul Jellinger, Chairman of the Institute for Endocrine Health, an educational component of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE)—the diabetes specialists.

Q. What is diabetes?

A. Diabetes is a metabolic disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone necessary to convert sugar, and other food into energy essential for living. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in America and a significant risk contributor to heart disease, kidney disease, vision loss and serious circulation problems.

Symptoms of diabetes include: frequent urination, excessive thirst, unexplained weight loss, sudden vision changes, tingling or numbness in limbs and fatigue. However, many patients with diabetes have few or no symptoms.

Q. Who is at risk for diabetes?

A. Anyone. However, risk factors for developing diabetes include: obesity, family history, diabetes during pregnancy, physical inactivity and race. African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians and some Asian Americans are more at risk for developing diabetes than other ethnic groups.

Q. What should people do if they believe they are at risk for diabetes?

A. Early detection and treatment of diabetes can greatly reduce a patient's chance of developing the serious adverse consequences associated with the disease, such as blindness, or



lower-limb loss. A simple blood test performed by a doctor will determine the level of glucose (sugar) in the blood.

If tests indicate diabetes, seek treatment by an endocrinologist (the specialists who treat diabetes) for access to the latest treatment options.

Q. How can someone reduce the chances of developing diabetes?

A. Good eating habits, maintaining ideal body weight, regular exercise and frequent diabetes screenings can help reduce the chances for developing the disease. Awareness of personal risk factors are also key to early detection and treatment.

Q. How is diabetes treated?

A. While there is no cure for diabetes, it can be managed with the help of a qualified health care team—including an endocrinologist. Treatment strategies can include: diet control, exercise, home blood glucose testing, and in some cases, oral medication possibly including insulin.

For more information on diabetes, or to find a local endocrinologist, visit www.AACE.com or call 904-353-7878.