



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Are You at Risk for Diabetes?

(NAPSA)—Miss America 1999, Nicole Johnson Baker, was diagnosed with diabetes when she was 19 years old. Since then she has become an advocate for diabetes education and informing the public about the risk factors for type 2 diabetes. She just finished developing a risk assessment test with the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) that will help people determine if they are at risk for type 2 diabetes. Some of the risk factors include:

- Being overweight or obese.

The more overweight a person is and the longer he or she stays overweight, the greater the chance of developing type 2 diabetes. “The results of a federally funded study of 3,234 people at high risk for diabetes showed that moderate diet and exercise resulting in a five to seven percent weight loss can delay and, in some cases, prevent type 2 diabetes altogether,” noted Baker.

- Being 45 years of age or older.

“Diabetes can strike at any age but the risk increases as you get older,” Baker commented. If you are 45 or older and overweight, it is strongly recommended that you get tested.

- Having a parent or sibling with diabetes.

A person with a family history of diabetes has a greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes than the general population.

- High blood pressure or high cholesterol.

A person whose blood pressure is at or above 140/90 and whose “bad” cholesterol level, meaning LDL cholesterol, is high, runs a greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes.



**Nicole Johnson Baker, Miss America 1999, who lives with Type 1 diabetes, discusses risk factors and prevention of the disease with a health and nutrition store customer.**

- Gestational diabetes or giving birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds.

Gestational diabetes occurs in women who have never had diabetes but experience high glucose levels during pregnancy. These women have a 20 to 50 percent chance of developing type 2 diabetes. Women who gave birth to at least one baby weighing more than nine pounds also have an increased risk.

Nicole’s advice for fighting diabetes is to be proactive. “Don’t wait until you show symptoms to get tested.” Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed by making lifestyle modifications. “That’s why I’m thrilled to be working with GNC to spread the word about what steps all Americans can take to avoid diabetes and its serious complications.” The Diabetes Risk Assessment tests are available at GNC stores nationwide. To find your local GNC, log on to [www.gnc.com](http://www.gnc.com).