

November is American Diabetes Month

More than likely, each one of us knows someone with diabetes. It affects one out of 11 people, with over 29 million Americans diagnosed. To help raise awareness about the disease and issues surrounding it, we recognize American Diabetes Month each November.

It's important for you to understand what diabetes is, what your risks are and how to prevent the disease. If you are already living with diabetes, it is essential for you to learn how to manage it. Fortunately, your TRICARE® pharmacy benefit can help.

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a group of diseases that affect how your body uses blood sugar (glucose). Glucose is important to your health because it is a main source of energy for the cells that make up your muscles and tissues. Glucose is also your brain's main source of fuel.

Types of Diabetes

There are three types of diabetes:

- **Type-1 diabetes** (sometimes called juvenile diabetes) is usually diagnosed in young people, but it can also develop in adults. With type 1 diabetes, your body no longer makes insulin or doesn't make enough insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is important for metabolism.
- **Type-2 diabetes** (sometimes called adult-onset diabetes) can affect people at any age, including children. However, type 2 diabetes develops most often in middle-aged and older people. With type 2 diabetes, your body does not use insulin properly, this is called insulin resistance.
- **Gestational diabetes** can develop in some women during pregnancy. This is because pregnant women make hormones that can lead to insulin resistance.

Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes

There are many factors that increase your risk of diabetes, including:

- **Age** – As you age, your risk for developing diabetes increases.
- **Family History** – If someone in your family has diabetes, you are twice as likely to develop the disease.
- **High Blood Pressure** – Having high blood pressure doubles your risk.
- **Gestational diabetes during pregnancy** – If you develop gestational diabetes during pregnancy, your risk for type 2 diabetes increases after pregnancy.
- **Race** – Although it is unclear why, diabetes happens more often in Hispanic/Latino Americans, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and Alaskan natives.
- **Activity Level** – Living a sedentary lifestyle increases your risk of developing diabetes.
- **Weight** – Individuals with a higher body mass index have an increased risk for type 2 diabetes. The more fatty tissue you have the more resistant your cells become to insulin.

The good news is that type 2 diabetes is preventable.

Studies have proven that high-risk people can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes by losing weight. Two successful tips to help prevent diabetes are getting 30 minutes of exercise 5 days a week and eating a variety of low-fat foods.

Already diagnosed with diabetes?

If you or a loved one are living with diabetes, or have been recently diagnosed, it is important to manage the disease because staying healthy can prevent potentially serious complications. Your TRICARE pharmacy benefit is here to help you manage your diabetes.

Your pharmacy benefit covers the following supplies, which can be obtained through TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery, from a military pharmacy or a TRICARE network retail pharmacy:

- Insulin Products
- Blood and Urine Glucose Test Strips
- Blood and Urine Ketone/Acetone Test Strips
- Diabetic Syringes and Needles
- Lancets

Your prescription copayments will apply. Visit Tricare.mil to see the current copay schedule. If you have Medicare, it does not cover insulin or syringes. TRICARE is the primary payer for these diabetic supplies. TRICARE also covers some diabetic equipment under the TRICARE medical program, including home glucose monitors and, in some cases, insulin infusion pumps.

[Learn more about diabetic supplies covered by TRICARE.](#)

Diabetes is both preventable and manageable. Make the right choices to stay healthy and know that your TRICARE pharmacy benefit is here to help you manage your diabetes.