

# Diabetes & You

## Good Test Scores Key For People With Diabetes

(NAPSA)—There's good news for people with diabetes. Research indicates that the majority of those with the condition are doing a better job of managing it.

Just over 20 million Americans have diabetes. Most have type 2, or adult-onset diabetes, in which the body loses its ability to use insulin properly.

If not managed properly, type 2 diabetes can lead to the loss of limbs and eyesight, blindness and heart disease. It's estimated that diseases linked to type 2 diabetes, particularly those that involve obesity and lack of exercise, tax the U.S. health system to the tune of \$22.9 billion a year in direct medical costs.

Key to managing the condition properly is testing. The good news, according to a recent Health Trends™ Report by the lab testing company Quest Diagnostics, is that more people with the condition are controlling the disease better. The study—based on 22.7 million lab tests performed by Quest Diagnostics—reveals that between 2001 and 2006, diabetes control improved by 44 percent.

The key test reveals the status of a person's blood sugar levels over a period of several weeks. The test is called hemoglobin A1c.

The target for those with diabetes is a blood sugar level of less than 7 percent of hemoglobin—the main protein in red blood cells. Experts believe that every reduction of a percentage point of glucose in hemoglobin represents a 40 percent reduction in a patient's risk of eye, kidney or nerve-related complications.

According to Dr. Francine Kaufman, a professor at the University

### Ask Your Doctor

Your physician can help you diagnose diabetes using widely available laboratory tests.

Symptoms of diabetes include:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Increased fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurry vision

If you experience one or more of these symptoms, contact your doctor.



of Southern California and past president of the American Diabetes Association, "Diabetes can be a life-taking, life-altering disease if you don't manage it."

Said Kaufman, who analyzed the data, "Control has gotten better and impressively so." However, she added that there was still more to do in terms of controlling the disease given that the data suggests that the rate of improvement has slowed.

The results were presented at the American Diabetes Association's annual scientific meeting in Chicago. The study also found that people with diabetes have a worse time controlling the condition in the winter—possibly as a result of holiday feasting—and that men struggle with it more than women.

Said Kaufman, "People with diabetes will have to get out and get walking, lose that five to 10 pounds. Just taking a pill and not doing anything else isn't enough."

For more information, go to [www.questdiagnostics.com](http://www.questdiagnostics.com).