

HEART HEALTH

Why Having Diabetes May Be The Same As Having Heart Disease

(NAPSA)—Diabetes is on the rise in America. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the number of people with diabetes has more than doubled in the last 20 years, from 5.8 million to 13.3 million, and about five million cases remain undiagnosed. What's more, type 2 diabetes, once called "adult-onset diabetes," is now being diagnosed more often in teenagers. Recent figures predict that one in three babies born in the year 2000 will go on to develop diabetes at some point in their lifetime.

Did you know that people with diabetes are at twice the risk for heart disease? Doctors now believe that people with diabetes have the same risk of having a cardiac event as someone who has already had a heart attack or stroke. Diabetes raises heart disease risk even when blood sugar levels are under control. In fact, people with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke than people without diabetes. Heart disease is the number-one cause of early death among people with diabetes.

Because of this increased risk, people with diabetes need to manage their disease carefully—even though at times they may not have symptoms. Type 2 is the most common form of diabetes. It affects about 17 million Americans. In type 2 diabetes, either the body does not make enough insulin, a hormone that converts blood sugar into energy, or the cells cannot use the insulin prop-

erly. This is a condition known as insulin resistance. When blood sugar levels rise and stay high over time, serious health problems such as heart disease can result.

What's more, diabetes often occurs along with other risk factors for heart disease, like high cholesterol, high blood pressure and obesity.

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If you have diabetes, take steps today to reduce your risk of complications. Your doctor can help you develop a plan to get blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol under control. The plan may include diet, exercise and sometimes medication. This may include insulin, diabetes medication, blood pressure medication or cholesterol-lowering medicines. The American Diabetes Association recommends that, in addition to diet and exercise, adults with type 2 diabetes should be considered for cholesterol-lowering medication regardless of their LDL cholesterol levels.

Talk to your doctor about how to best control your diabetes, including lowering your cholesterol levels and your risk for heart disease. Take control of your risk factors and don't let your diabetes control you!

For more information about cholesterol, visit www.cholesterolkit.com.