

# Could I be at Risk of Diabetes?

Some people are at greater risk of developing diabetes than others. Some of the risk factors are non-modifiable (things you cannot change), like your age, race, family history or medical history. For example, your risk of developing diabetes will be higher than average if you meet any of the following criteria:<sup>1</sup>

- Being 40 years of age or older
- Being Aboriginal, Hispanic, Asian, South Asian or African descent (these are all high-risk ethnic groups)
- Having a parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- Having any of the health complications that are associated with diabetes (e.g. heart disease, kidney disease, eye disease, problems with erection, nerve damage)
- Having given birth to a baby that weighed more than 4 kg (9 lb) at birth
- Having had diabetes while you were pregnant
- Having a diagnosis of:
  - Polycystic ovary syndrome
  - Acanthosis nigricans (darkened patches of skin)
  - Schizophrenia

On the other hand, some of the factors that put people at risk of diabetes are things that can be eliminated or at least brought under control (i.e. they are modifiable). These include:<sup>1</sup>

- Being overweight; especially when the weight is mostly carried around the middle
- Having impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG)
- Having high blood pressure
- Having cholesterol or other fats in the blood





## The Symptoms of Diabetes: A Message from Your Body

The symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination, excessive thirst, unusual weight loss, increased fatigue, irritability and blurry vision;<sup>1</sup> however, it can be difficult to make the link between the symptoms and the disease. A lot of people with diabetes have no symptoms at all. Many of those who do have them will not realize that they are being caused by diabetes.

Once a person has diabetes, it can be difficult to maintain healthy levels of the amount of sugar in their blood. This can lead to two things: periods of hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), which can induce feelings of shakiness, dizziness, sweating, confusion and hunger; and hyperglycemia (high blood sugar), which is manifested by frequent urination, fatigue and blurry vision.<sup>2</sup>

The goal of good diabetes management is to avoid periods of hypo- and hyperglycemia, which put a lot of strain on your body. Managing your blood sugar properly will also help you avoid the consequences of diabetes, which can be serious.<sup>2</sup>

#### References:

1. Canadian Diabetes Association. *Diabetes* Fact Sheet. Available on-line at [http://www.diabetes.ca/Files/Diabetes\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Mar04.pdf](http://www.diabetes.ca/Files/Diabetes_Fact_Sheet_Mar04.pdf). Last accessed January 11, 2006.
2. American Diabetes Association website. Accessible at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org). Last accessed January 11, 2006.



© 2006  
Pfizer Canada Inc.  
Kirkland, Quebec  
H9J 2M5



06NV10E