

Are You At Risk for Diabetes?

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November is **National Diabetes Month**. Did you know that millions of Americans have diabetes, and half of them don't even know it! People with diabetes may have different symptoms. They may experience all, some, or none of the following:

- A need to urinate often (even at night)
- Constant thirst or hunger
- Weight loss that cannot be explained
- Dry or itchy skin
- Skin infections
- Slow healing of cuts
- Nausea or vomiting
- Feeling tired or weak
- Numbness or tingling in feet or hands
- Blurry vision

Just what is diabetes? Diabetes is a condition in which the body has trouble making insulin. Insulin is a hormone that controls the amount of sugar in our blood. When a person has diabetes, the body makes no insulin, too little insulin, or insulin that does not work right. This results in high blood sugar.

What happens if I have high blood sugar? Over time, high blood sugar can lead to vision loss or even blindness. It can also harm your kidneys, blood vessels, and nerves. People with diabetes have a higher chance of developing high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease.

Am I at risk for diabetes? Some factors that may increase your risk of developing diabetes are:

- **Heredity:** If one of your parents, grandparents, or siblings had diabetes, you are more likely to have the disease.
- **Obesity:** Being overweight increases your chance of developing diabetes.

- **Age:** Your body makes less insulin as you age.
- **Race:** If you are Hispanic, African American, American Indian, or Asian American, you have a higher risk of developing diabetes.
- **Gestational Diabetes:** If you had diabetes while you were pregnant or gave birth to a baby weighing nine pounds or more, you have a greater risk of developing the disease later in life.

Can diabetes be cured? In most cases of diabetes, there is no cure. But diabetes can be controlled. Controlling diabetes means keeping your blood sugar at a normal level. You can do this with a proper diet and regular exercise. Some people may also need insulin injections or medication. By controlling your blood sugar, you reduce your risk of health complications.

What is a healthy diet?

- Eat less fat and saturated fat.
- Choose foods with fiber, such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Eat less concentrated sweets, such as sugar, honey, candy, and regular soft drinks.
- Eat less salt and sodium.

A doctor can determine if you have diabetes. So, if you have any of the signs or symptoms listed here, visit your doctor and get checked.

How can I learn more about diabetes? Call the American Diabetes Association at 1-800-DIABETES or 1-800-342-2383 (available in English and Spanish) or visit their website at www.diabetes.org. Call the American Dietetic Association at 1-800-366-1655, or the Hardee County Extension Office at 863-773-2164.

With Thanksgiving this month and since November 21 is Pumpkin Pie Day, I am including a pumpkin pie recipe from the American Diabetes Association cookbook, Flavorful Seasons. This recipe is the perfect finale to any fall feast and will not send your blood sugar level through the roof like some sweets do.

Pumpkin Pie

Preparation time: 10 minutes Number of Servings: 9 Serving Size: 1-inch slice

Ingredients:	2 cups crushed graham crackers	3 Tbsp. low-calorie margarine
	2 Tbsp. brown sugar	2 tsp. cinnamon
	2 cups pumpkin puree	12 oz. can evaporated skim milk
	2 eggs, beaten	1 tsp. cinnamon
	½ tsp. nutmeg	½ tsp. allspice

Preparation Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Combine the graham crackers, margarine, sugar, and 2 tsp. cinnamon and press into the bottom and sides of a 9-inch pie plate. Place in the oven and bake for 5 minutes. Remove and set aside.
2. Beat together all remaining ingredients in the order given. Pour into the crust and bake for 15 minutes. Lower temperature to 350 degrees and bake for 35 minutes until set. Cool slightly or chill before serving.

181 calories per serving Exchanges per serving: 2 carbohydrate

Happy eating, and most of all, Happy Thanksgiving!