

Health & Wellness



February 2022



Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. **Insulin** is a hormone that regulates blood sugar. **Hyperglycemia** or raised blood sugar, is a common effect of uncontrolled diabetes and over time leads to serious damage to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels.

There are 3 Main Types of Diabetes

Type 1 Diabetes (also called Juvenile diabetes) your body does not produce enough insulin.

Type 2 Diabetes (most common) your body produces insulin but not very well.

Gestational Diabetes a temporary condition in pregnancy.

Anyone can develop diabetes, but it tends to be more common in people who are overweight, sedentary, or individuals with a family history of diabetes. Diabetes can cause a heart attack, lead to stroke, kidney failure, or loss of feet or legs.

The good news is that diabetes can be controlled. You can avoid or reduce these risks by taking responsibility for your day-to-day care. By eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly you can reduce your chance of developing diabetes or control your diabetes.

It's important to know the **signs** and **symptoms of diabetes**, such as:

- Frequent trips to the bathroom.
- Unquenchable thirst.
- Losing weight without trying.
- Weakness and fatigue.
- Tingling or numbness in your hands, legs, or feet.

Before a person develops diabetes, they most always have prediabetes.

Prediabetes is a serious health condition where blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but **not** high enough yet to be diagnosed as diabetes. Prediabetes doesn't always have signs or symptoms, so it is important to get your blood sugar levels tested regularly.

Prediabetes is also a window of opportunity to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. **Prediabetes can be reversed!**

To learn more about diabetes and diabetes prevention visit the [American Diabetes Association](#) website.

Take this [1-minute test](#) to see if you could be at risk for Prediabetes!

If you are enrolled in one of EPC's medical plans and have been diagnosed with Type 1 or 2 Diabetes, then you have access to a **Meritain Health Nurse Coach**

(at NO charge to you) who will help you manage your diabetes. Call 1.888.610.0089 to learn more.

Heart Healthy Tips for Valentines Day!

Rather than tempting your beloved with chocolates, consider a gift that has more permanence. Search for a poem that describes your feelings and write it on beautiful paper for a handmade Valentine.

Sharing is caring – if you do go out for a romantic dinner date, order one entrée to share. Many restaurant servings are enough for two – splitting will keep you from overdoing it. - *Tips from the American Heart Association.*

Does cold weather make your joints hurt?

You aren't alone. Although arthritis can increase susceptibility to aches when temperatures drop, cold weather can make anyone's bones hurt.

To ease the impact of cold weather on your body:

- ✓ Dress in layers to stay warm.
- ✓ **Do light exercise before you go out;** this will lubricate and loosen stiff joints.
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight to reduce stress on joints.

Grocery Shopping Tip:

Read the ingredients. The first ingredient listed is usually what the item contains the most of. Try to avoid products with long lists of ingredients or ones you can't pronounce.

Q. Cold, flu and COVID-19 symptoms?

A. The viruses that cause colds, influenza and COVID-19 spread in respiratory droplets and often have similar symptoms. When you're trying to tell which condition you have, consider these differences:

COVID-19 vs. a cold: Shortness of breath, fever, fatigue, muscle aches and loss of taste and smell occur more commonly with COVID-19 than the common cold. Colds are more likely to involve sneezing.

COVID-19 vs. the flu: Both conditions can cause a cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, fever, fatigue, muscle aches and shortness of breath. Unlike influenza, COVID-19 often involves the loss of taste or smell; the loss often occurs early in the illness without a stuffy nose.

When to get tested: It's often difficult to tell what condition you have based on your symptoms alone. Get tested if there's a possibility you could have COVID-19 since the risk of serious illness is higher than with other common viruses. —Elizabeth Smoots, MD

DO seek virtual care as a first step if you are experiencing flu or COVID-19 symptoms!

With the double threat of flu and COVID-19, virtual care allows you to be evaluated without risking exposure—or potentially passing illness to others.

If you are enrolled in any EPC medical plan then you can visit with a virtual care primary doctor through **98point6** within minutes! Your co-pay is \$0, or only \$5 if you are in a high deductible plan.

Click [here](#) to register and start a visit.



FREE COVID-19 Rapid Test Kits are being provided by the federal government. Every household can receive **4 at-home COVID-19 Rapid Test kits FREE OF CHARGE**.

Just click [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) or copy and paste <https://www.covidtests.gov> into your browser. If you do not have internet access you can call 1-800-232-0233 to order kits. To find a testing site near you visit the HHS.gov website [here](#).

FREE N95 Masks are available to pick up at local pharmacies and community health sites across the country. Every person is allowed up to 3 pending availability. - [HHS.gov](#).

If you are an EPC medical plan participant, don't forget to log on and register your new Meritain Health account! Go to www.meritain.com to register now. If you need assistance click on the instructional flyer [here](#).



Winter Family Fun!

Don't let the chilly months and less daylight hold you back.

Whatever the size of your family — mom, dad, kids, grandparents, siblings — daytime, nighttime, indoors or outdoors, take time for a midweek break or weekend family adventure, and have fun together. Start by stepping outside. Exploring the outdoors can invigorate and energize you. Walk through a park, toss a football or try snowshoeing or roller skating, weather permitting. As long as kids bundle up and stay safe, being outside in the cold offers mental and physical benefits for them and for adults.



Indoors, spend warm, cozy evenings playing card games or board games. Read novels or historical sagas out loud to your audience. Try out an online danceercise routine. Have fun family movie nights or camping nights with sleeping bags. Baking nights can provide a relaxing finish before bedtime. On bad weather days, gyms and indoor swimming pools are a great outlet for your kids to run around and enjoy, or maybe explore an intramural pickup basketball league. At night, do some stargazing, a unique experience for a family to search and admire the stars together. *Article published in the Dec. 2020 Personal Best Newsletter*

Our newsletter addresses programs made available through the EPC and your church may not participate in all these programs.