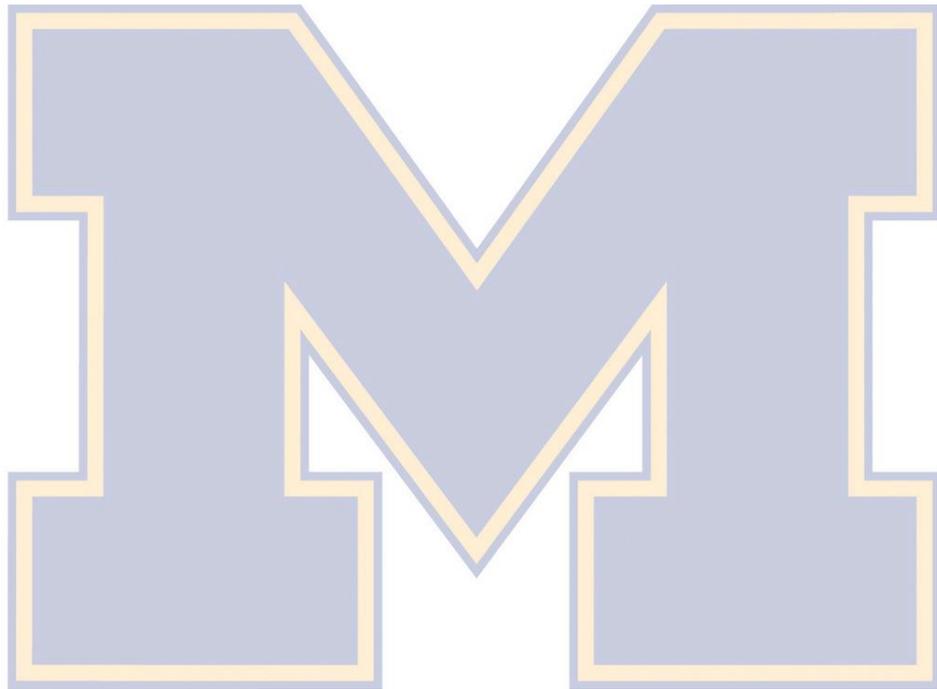


# Newsletter #3

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## **Diabetes is Always a Serious Disease**

Some people who have diabetes think it's not a very serious disease. They may believe that their diabetes is not serious because they got it late in life or because they don't take insulin. There are people who believe that they only have a "touch" of sugar or "borderline" diabetes. These ideas are not correct – **diabetes is always a serious disease.**

Before the discovery of insulin, diabetes was usually a fatal disease. When insulin was discovered in 1921, it allowed millions of people with type 1 diabetes to survive. Insulin was such a dramatic lifesaving discovery that many people came to believe that insulin "took care" of diabetes and that it was no longer a serious disease. This is not true.

Whether you take insulin or not, your diabetes puts you at risk for the following complications:

- **Eye Disease** – Diabetes is the leading cause of new blindness in adults: 12,000 to 24,000 people lose their eye-sight because of diabetes every year.
- **Foot Amputations** – Diabetes is the cause of more than 65,000 foot amputations not caused by trauma in the U.S. every year.
- **Kidney Failure** – Each year, almost 48,000 new people suffer kidney failure because of diabetes. These people must get a kidney transplant or use an artificial kidney machine (dialysis).
- **Heart and Blood Vessel Disease** – Two out of 3 people with diabetes die of a heart attack and/or stroke. People with diabetes have two to four times heart disease death rates compared with people without diabetes.

- **High blood pressure:** Three out of 4 people with diabetes have high blood pressure. High blood pressure increases the risk of strokes, heart attacks and diabetes eye disease.
- People with diabetes are twice as likely to have depression, than people without diabetes. In addition, depression is associated with a 60% increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes

It is now proven these complications can be delayed, or in some cases, prevented through diabetes self-care and keeping blood sugar, blood cholesterol and blood pressure levels close to normal. Diabetes can be a silent disease because it is possible to have high blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol without any symptoms. The high levels of blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure may be doing serious damage to the body but the person with diabetes may not realize it until one of the complications appears. If you have diabetes, you need to take your diabetes seriously and make an effort to keep your blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure as close to normal as is safe for you. Through diet, exercise, and often medicine, diabetes can be managed.

It's not always easy, but it is worth it.

**Ask your doctor, nurse, or dietitian the following questions:**

1. Is everything possible being done to lower my blood sugar?
2. What tests do I need to see if I am developing any of the complications of diabetes?

