



Men, Women and Diabetes



In a very basic way, the effects of diabetes are the same among men and women in that the condition causes damage to blood vessels and nerves. However, there are marked differences in how the disease affects men versus women.

Men

Between 13.8% and 17% of men in the United States have diabetes. This is a higher percentage than for women. Diabetes in men can lead to many health issues including loss of muscle mass.

For men, it takes a lower level of weight gain and fat buildup to trigger high blood sugar levels. Diabetic men have an average body mass index (BMI) of 32, while diabetic women have an average BMI of 34.



Women

Women's blood sugar levels are affected by hormonal fluctuations and pregnancy. Diabetic women may require more frequent medication monitoring to adjust for menstrual cycles and menopause.

Women should talk with their doctor about being tested for diabetes if:

- **They have polycystic ovarian syndrome** because this condition can affect insulin production. Symptoms include irregular menstrual cycles, acne, depression, fertility problems and weight gain.
- **They are pregnant.** Women *without* diabetes can experience gestational diabetes and should be tested between weeks 24 and 28 of pregnancy. Woman *with* diabetes should talk to their doctor about their plans to become pregnant because diabetes can make it harder to conceive and cause complications for mother and baby.



Women with diabetes have a higher rate of heart attacks than men with diabetes. Women are more likely to experience blindness, kidney failure and depression.

Everyone

These symptoms of diabetes can occur in men and women of all ages:



- Increased thirst and hunger
- Passing more urine than normal and going more often
- Increased urination at night
- Tiredness
- Blurry vision
- In Type 2 diabetes, sores or cuts that don't heal
- In Type 1 diabetes, excessive weight loss