

High Blood Sugar

High blood sugar means having too much sugar called glucose in the blood. High blood sugar is also called hyperglycemia. The body's cells need blood sugar. A normal blood sugar level is 70-100. A blood sugar level above 140 is too high. You may not feel any signs of high blood sugar but damage can be happening to your body. High blood sugar over years can damage the eyes, kidneys, blood vessels, heart, nerves and feet.

Causes

High blood sugar can happen with diabetes where your body is not making enough insulin or is not able to use insulin, as it should. High blood sugar can get worse because of:

- Stress
- Infection or illness
- Certain medicines such as steroids
- Pregnancy

The most common reasons for high blood sugar in people with diabetes are:

- Not taking enough insulin or diabetes pills
- Missed, skipped or delayed diabetes medicine
- Eating too much food
- Eating foods high in sugar or carbohydrates

Signs

High blood sugar affects people differently. Some people have no warning signs. High blood sugar may happen slowly over time.

You may have one or more signs of high blood sugar. Family members may notice these signs before you do.

- Extreme thirst
- Urinate often
- Increased hunger
- Blurred vision
- Weight loss or gain
- Feeling tired or sleepy

- Feeling moody or grumpy
- Slow healing of wounds
- Numbness in feet or hands
- Vaginal itching or have vaginal infections often
- Impotence
- Skin itching
- Skin infections such as boils

Your Care

See your doctor if you have signs of high blood sugar. Talk to your doctor about the cause of your high blood sugar. You may need to take medicine to control your blood sugar, or you may need to change how you eat and exercise.

If you have diabetes, control high blood sugar by following your diabetes treatment plan:

- Follow your meal plan.
- Take your insulin and pills as directed.
- Test your blood sugar often and keep a record of the results.
- Follow your activity or exercise routine.
- Contact your doctor if you see patterns of high blood sugar.
- Follow your sick day plan if you are ill.

If not treated, high blood sugar can lead to coma and even death.

Talk to your doctor, nurse or diabetes educator if you have any questions or concerns.