

## November is American Diabetes Month *Anatomy of a Misunderstood Disease*



Diabetes. Isn't that the blood sugar disease that only plagues the obese? Not exactly. Diabetes affects people of all ages and body types. In fact, over 23 million Americans – children and adults – have the condition – and 25% of them don't even know it.

### So what is diabetes and why should I be concerned?

According to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes causes more deaths each year than AIDS and breast cancer combined!

It occurs when the body either doesn't make enough insulin (Type 1 diabetes) or can't use insulin properly (Type 2 diabetes). Insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, is necessary to "unlock" the cells so glucose (blood sugar) can enter and be used for energy. When glucose can't get into the cells, the sugar in your blood rises. This can cause damage to the kidneys, heart, nerves and eyes. Left untreated, diabetes can create irreversible and often fatal complications.

### Who's at risk?

An estimated 70 to 80 million Americans have prediabetes, or glucose resistance syndrome, putting them at high risk for diabetes. If you have a family history of diabetes, are over the age of 45, or are of Hispanic, Native American, African-American or Asian descent, you also carry a higher risk for this disease. Other risk factors include:

- Being overweight
- Poor eating habits
- History of gestational (pregnancy induced) diabetes

- High blood pressure
- Elevated cholesterol
- Little or no exercise
- Tobacco use

### Diabetes Symptoms

Often people with diabetes have no symptoms at all, or may only have vague systems that are easily dismissed. Check with your doctor if you're experiencing any of the following:

- Increased thirst
- Dry mouth
- Frequent urination
- Increased hunger
- Weight loss without dieting
- Slow healing wounds
- Itchy skin
- Feeling very tired
- Irritability
- Blurred vision

Diabetes or prediabetes is easily diagnosed with a simple blood test called fasting plasma glucose (FPG) and/or a two-hour oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT).

### Reduce your risk.

You can make a few simple lifestyle changes to reduce your risk for diabetes, control your blood sugar levels and protect yourself from further complications:

**Manage your weight:** Get to and maintain a healthy weight.

**Stay active:** Regular physical activity helps your body use insulin and also helps with weight loss.

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**Eat a balanced diet:** Strive to eat more whole grains, nuts, lean meats, vegetables and fruits.

**Cut back:** Limit your intake of sugary foods, sodas and processed meats.

**Quit smoking:** Smoking increases the risk for diabetes complications.



**Sleep more:** Sleep is important for your overall health and wellness.

If you already have diabetes, adopting healthier behaviors may not be enough, so be sure to take your medications as prescribed by your doctor, monitor your blood sugar regularly and have an annual diabetic eye exam. Also, you may want to consider wearing a medical alert bracelet or necklace to help others identify your condition in an emergency.

Committing to a healthy lifestyle today can save more than your time and money in the long run. It can save your life!

### COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES

- Atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) which can cause coronary artery disease, peripheral arterial disease, heart attack or stroke.
- Vision Loss
- Kidney Failure
- Nerve Disease
- Death

Resources:  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org); [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

## Ask the Coach

**Q** I want to get toned but I'm not really interested in increasing my strength. How should I train for toning?

**A** Physiologically, there is no difference between toning and strengthening. Many people are confused about the difference between developing muscular strength and muscle tone, or definition. As muscle strength improves and body fat decreases, the body will take on a leaner and more toned appearance and will function more effectively. The way to increase strength and decrease body fat (and thereby increase muscle definition) is through a combination of regular cardiovascular exercise and strength training, and a diet reduced in fat and calories. Remember though, genetics plays a big role in determining the level of definition you can achieve. Some people are naturally leaner than others. When you focus on being strong, aerobically fit and healthy, you'll find that an improvement in your appearance is just a positive side effect.



Resource: [acefitness.org](http://acefitness.org) and [medscape.com](http://medscape.com)

For more information about healthy eating, browse WebMD's Lifestyle Improvement Program on Nutrition. Log in to MyBlueService from [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com) and look under the **Living Healthy** tab. Select **Lifestyle Improvement Programs from WebMD** then **Nutrition**.

# The Great American Smokeout



plan to be smoke free. There are many free resources

The American Cancer Society will mark its 36th **Great American Smokeout on November 17** by encouraging smokers to either use the day to quit smoking altogether, or make a

available to help you or a loved one make this giant step towards healthier living. The American Cancer Society and the Florida Department of Health offer tobacco cessation programs within your community, so be sure to check out [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), or [www.flquitline.com](http://www.flquitline.com) for more information. You can also talk to your employer's benefits or wellness coordinator about organizing a tobacco cessation program in your workplace. Smoke free is the best way to be!

## Fresh & Healthy

Recipe of the Month

### Pumpkin Pie Squares

*Pumpkin is packed with nutritional value. Try this delicious, lighter alternative to pumpkin pie.*



#### Ingredients

1 cup all-purpose flour  
 ½ cup quick-cooking oats  
 ½ cup brown sugar, packed  
 ½ cup cold butter

#### Directions

In a small bowl, combine the flour, oats and brown sugar. Cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Press into a greased 13 x 9 inch baking pan. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

In a large bowl, beat filling ingredients until smooth; pour over crust. Bake for 45 minutes.

Combine topping ingredients and sprinkle over filling. Bake 15-20 minutes longer or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool and store in the refrigerator until ready to be served. Makes 16 servings.

#### Filling:

2 cans (15 oz each) solid-pack pumpkin  
 2 cans (12 oz each) evaporated milk  
 4 eggs  
 1½ cups sugar  
 2 tsp ground cinnamon  
 1 tsp ground ginger  
 ½ tsp ground cloves  
 1 tsp salt

#### Topping:

½ cup brown sugar, packed  
 ½ cup pecans, chopped  
 2 TBSP butter, softened

#### Nutritional Facts

Per serving; Calories: 248; Total fat: 10g; Saturated fat: 5g; Cholesterol: 64mg; Sodium 212mg; Carbohydrate: 36g; Fiber: 2g; Protein 4g.

Looking for delicious, healthy recipes the whole family can enjoy? Check out our Healthy Recipes from WebMD! Simply log in to MyBlueService from [www.bcbsfl.com](http://www.bcbsfl.com). Look under the **Living Healthy** tab and click on **Healthy Recipes from WebMD**.



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