

# FAQ | HIGH SCHOOL & COLLEGE GIRLS

## 1. *Why is diabetes happening to young people?*

Young people now have a completely different lifestyle from that of their parents and grand parents. There is more eating out, more calorie dense foods and drinks, less physical activity and more sedentary activities like TV watching, computer based games and other activities. This is also leading to childhood obesity. Genetics also plays a part but lifestyle is the bigger contributor.

## 2. *Are the symptoms different in youngsters?*

Teenagers and people in their 20's are likely to have no symptoms at all or have the usual symptoms of excessive urination, hunger, thirst, weight loss, fatigue, blurring of vision or have it accidentally discovered during a screening camp or pre-employment health check up. Young persons may not pay too much attention to subtle changes in their body.

## 3. *At what age should diabetes screening begin? When should girls get tested for diabetes?*

Screening for diabetes in our country should begin by age 30 or sooner if a girl/ young woman is overweight, she has classic symptoms, she is planning a pregnancy or she has polycystic ovary syndrome. The girl should be screened for diabetes if there is a family history of diabetes or if her mother had gestational diabetes.

## 4. *What is the connection between irregular menstrual cycles and diabetes?*

Girls may have menstrual irregularities due to being overweight or obese. Polycystic ovary syndrome typically presents in young girls (after puberty) and young women. Menstrual irregularities are an important presenting symptom of PCOS. Insulin resistance is also a feature of PCOS. Girls with PCOS have a much higher risk of diabetes and prediabetes.

## 5. *Is academic stress a risk factor for diabetes?*

Academic stress by itself may not cause diabetes but gaining weight due to inactivity and eating too much due to stress and lack of sleep may all lead to diabetes.

## 6. *What are the risk factors for diabetes?*

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|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Family history                              | 5. Physical inactivity       |
| 2. High risk ethnic group (like asian indians) | 6. Mother having GDM         |
| 3. Overweight/Obesity                          | 7. Polycystic Ovary Syndrome |
| 4. Unhealthy eating                            | 8. Smoking                   |

## 7. *What is the best way to stay healthy and prevent diabetes?*

There are certain non modifiable risk factors like age, gender, ethnicity and genetics. But diabetes is largely preventable by adopting simple lifestyle modifications:

- Eating a balanced and healthy diet
- Being physically active
- Maintaining an ideal body weight
- Taking measures to reduce stress
- Getting enough sleep
- Avoid smoking
- Diabetes can be diagnosed only with blood tests. It is important to get it tested periodically.

## 8. *How can TV watching cause obesity?*

We do not move much while watching TV. Also most people tend to snack or eat more in front of the TV and may be tempted by food ads on TV. 1 hour of TV watching increases weight by 2 % every year. This has been shown by scientific studies in children and adults.

## 9. *What are the ways to help my friends and family to be diabetes free?*

Be a health care partner. Share your knowledge. Motivate your friends, colleagues and family members to follow/adopt a healthy lifestyle. Lead by example. Be a change agent.

## 10. *Is there an 'ideal' diet for diabetes prevention?*

The ideal diet for diabetes prevention should be

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Balanced (The right proportion of carbohydrates, fats and proteins) | 6. Rich in vegetables and fruit       |
| 2. High in fiber   | 7. The recommended amount of dairy    |
| 3. Low in saturated fat  | 8. No fasting, feasting, binge eating |
| 4. High in complex carbohydrates                                       | 9. No junk food                       |
| 5. Low in simple sugar   | 10. Less eating out.                  |