

FAQ | YOUNG WORKING WOMEN

- 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. All this needs to be considered.
- 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 'sitting' a risk factor for diabetes?**

Sitting is the new "smoking". Sitting for long periods of time increases the risk of weight gain and this can lead to diabetes and metabolic syndrome. Physical inactivity has been linked clearly to increased risk for diabetes. 2 hours of sitting is said to cancel the benefits of half an hour of physical activity. So stand, walk, garden, run, swim, play, and dance... keep moving.

- 6. What are the other risk factors for diabetes?**

 1. Family history
 2. Hypertension/ metabolic syndrome
 3. Overweight/ obesity
 4. Belonging to high risk ethnic group like asian Indians
 5. Physical inactivity
 6. Smoking
 7. PCOS
 8. Unhealthy Eating
 9. Mother having had GDM
- 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. Why is it important to optimize my health before pregnancy?

Young working women may already be married or planning to get married and will be getting ready to have a baby. We are now finding that many young women have varying degrees of glucose intolerance that can predispose them for gestational diabetes. There are also many health concerns like anaemia, overweight/obesity, nutritional deficiencies, Vitamin D deficiency, thyroid problems, immunizations that need updating and medications that may need to be changed. All this need to be considered prior to planning a pregnancy.

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

Be a health care buddy. Please share what you have learnt. Motivate your friends, colleagues and family members to follow a healthy lifestyle. Lead by example.

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

The ideal diet for diabetes prevention should be

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