

- *Diabetes: a Major Health Risk to Louisianians*
- *Symptoms of Diabetes*
- *Manage Your Diabetes with Help from Blue Cross*
- *Tips for a Healthier Holiday Bird*
- *Manage Your Weight — Even During Holidays*

## Diabetes: a Major Health Risk to Louisianians

In Louisiana, where good food and celebration are part of our culture, it's easy to overdo it. So it's no surprise that weight-related issues such as diabetes are serious and life-threatening problems for many in our state.

In fact, Louisiana now ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation in adult obesity and 8<sup>th</sup> in the rate of adults with diabetes.

So what is diabetes and what causes it? Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use *insulin*. This hormone is needed to convert sugar into energy for the body. People with diabetes have high blood sugar and can't produce enough insulin, which can cause major health complications.

### *Types of Diabetes and Risk Factors*

**Type 1 diabetes** or juvenile-onset diabetes typically strikes children and young adults, but it may occur at any age. In adults, Type 1 diabetes accounts for 5 to 10 percent of all diagnosed cases of the disease. Type 1 diabetes can be caused by genetic, environmental or autoimmune conditions, and unfortunately, there is no known way to prevent it.

**Type 2 diabetes** or adult-onset diabetes accounts for about 90 to 95 percent of all diagnosed cases. Type 2 diabetes usually appears at mid-life, when the body fails to properly use insulin. Type 2 diabetes is typically associated with getting older, as well as obesity, family history of diabetes and race/ethnicity.

**Gestational diabetes** is a form of glucose intolerance diagnosed during pregnancy. Gestational diabetes is more common among obese women and those with a family history of diabetes. It also occurs more frequently among African-Americans, Hispanic/Latina-Americans and Native Americans.

### *Treating Diabetes*

Diabetes can lead to serious complications such as blindness, kidney damage, heart disease and limb amputations. Diabetics can often lower their risk of these complications by controlling their blood sugar and blood pressure.

Many people with Type 2 diabetes can control their blood sugar by following a healthy meal plan and exercise program, losing excess weight and taking oral medication. Some people with Type 2 diabetes may also need insulin to control their blood glucose. People with Type 1 diabetes need insulin shots or must use an insulin pump to stay healthy.

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month. If you are at risk or have concerns about diabetes, check with your doctor.

Source: [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) or [www.stayhealthy.org](http://www.stayhealthy.org)

## Symptoms of Diabetes

Diabetes often goes undiagnosed because many of its symptoms appear relatively mild. Some diabetes symptoms include:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Unusual weight loss
- Increased fatigue
- Irritability
- Blurry vision



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Louisiana**

An independent licensee of the  
Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

[www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com)

## Manage Your Diabetes with Help from Blue Cross

Blue Cross offers Case Management services to our members who suffer from diabetes. Our Case Management nurses reach out to those who have been diagnosed with diabetes to counsel them on how to best manage their disease. We also provide materials to help educate members about diabetes.

As always, the best medicine for any disease is prevention. Exercise and a healthy diet can help to prevent diabetes — or help to manage the disease for those who have it. That's why Blue Cross sponsors the **Louisiana 2 Step** program to inspire Louisianians to take two steps to better health: *eat right and move more.*

The Louisiana 2 step offers a fun, free website at [www.Louisiana2Step.com](http://www.Louisiana2Step.com) where you can check out healthy eating tips, log your exercise and health progress and track your results. We've even created a companion site for kids, [www.2Step4Kids.com](http://www.2Step4Kids.com), with interactive games and kid-friendly information to encourage healthier lifestyles for children between the ages of 5 and 12.



## Tips for a Healthier Holiday Bird

Cooking the traditional turkey for Thanksgiving or other family holidays this season? Try these tips to cut back a bit on fat and calories.

- Use herbs, rather than extra fat, for flavor.
- For a golden skin, roast at high heat — 475°F — for the first 45 minutes, then reduce to 350°F.
- Leave the cavity stuffing-free. It's safer.
- Eat the meat without skin to reduce calories and fat.

Source: [www.healthdiscovery.net](http://www.healthdiscovery.net)



## Manage Your Weight — Even During Holidays

Eating healthy during the holidays is hard even for the most healthy-minded person. It's important to practice moderation as much as possible, so you don't end the year with unwanted pounds. Here are some basic tips to keep your weight under control during the holidays:

- Practice portion control.
- Exercise, even if it's shopping and walking through the mall.
- Use low-fat substitutions in recipes when possible.
- Keep a food diary to stay on track (try the one at [www.Louisiana2Step.com](http://www.Louisiana2Step.com)).
- Enjoy eating what you love, but in moderation.
- Recognize stressors and share feelings with friends to avoid emotional eating.
- Choose healthy options.

Source: [netwellness.org](http://netwellness.org)



  **BlueCross BlueShield of Louisiana**

An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

  **HMO Louisiana, Inc.**

A subsidiary of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

Have a question about healthcare?  
Visit us on the web  
at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com).

Have a question about your coverage? Call Customer Service at 1.800.495.BLUE or use the secure web form in the Customer section at [www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com).

5525 REITZ AVENUE • BATON ROUGE, LA 70809-3802