

Diabetes: Are You at Risk?

New Prescription Copayments in Place

Leading Our State in Wellness, Diversity

## Diabetes: Are You at Risk?

Type 2 diabetes results when the body has a problem with creating or using *insulin* — a hormone that transports blood sugar into cells. If insulin cannot deliver blood sugar into cells, your body cannot use it, causing a raised blood sugar level that damages organs and starves the cells of energy.

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of the disease and generally has a gradual onset, meaning a person may have a pre-diabetic condition for some time before being diagnosed. Some people with many risk factors never develop diabetes, but if you are aware of the risk factors, you may be able to detect diabetes early and manage it with the help of your medical provider.

These factors increase your risk of developing diabetes:

- **Diet and Weight.** A poor diet and obesity are primary risk factors, especially if excess weight is carried in the upper body.
- **Inactivity.** A sedentary lifestyle greatly increases your risk, while exercise reduces it.
- **It's a Family Thing.** People whose family members have type 2 diabetes are more at risk.
- **Age.** The risk of type 2 diabetes increases as you get older, especially after age 45.
- **Race.** Though no one knows why, African-Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans are more likely to develop diabetes than other groups.
- **Gestational Diabetes.** Women who developed gestational diabetes when pregnant have a greater risk of later having type 2 diabetes.
- **Depression.** Depression appears to raise the risk of type 2 diabetes. This could be because people who are depressed may gain weight and become less active.

- **High Blood Pressure, Triglycerides or Cholesterol.** If you have unhealthy levels of any of these measures, you have an increased risk of diabetes.

If you have one or more risk factors, ask your doctor whether you should begin regular blood sugar testing. People with type 2 diabetes often show no symptoms at first, making regular testing an important part of a preventive healthcare regimen.

Left undiagnosed and untreated, diabetes can be deadly. It can lead to heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, impaired vision or blindness and amputation. If you have any risk factors, talk to your doctor about ways to minimize your risk.

Sources: American Diabetes Association; National Institutes of Health

## Symptoms of Diabetes

See your doctor immediately if you are experiencing symptoms of diabetes, such as:

- increased thirst and frequent urination;
- increased appetite;
- fatigue;
- blurred vision;
- frequent or slow-healing infections or wounds; and
- erectile dysfunction in men.



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of Louisiana**

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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana incorporated as Louisiana Health Service & Indemnity Company

## New Prescription Copayments in Place

To ensure that we offer our customers a responsible and cost-effective drug benefit, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and our subsidiary, HMO Louisiana, Inc., update our preferred medication list or *formulary* each year.

### Where to find the latest drug copayment information

The latest preferred medication list is always available for you to read or download on our website at [www.bcbsla.com/pharmacy](http://www.bcbsla.com/pharmacy). Customers also may call the Express Scripts\*\* Customer Service Department toll-free at 1-866-781-7533 (which is also printed on your ID card) to have a printed copy mailed to you.

### Save money with the power of choice

In many cases, you can minimize your out-of-pocket medication expenses by considering an alternative medication in a lower-copayment tier. Check the Blue

Cross formulary or ask your doctor to check whether a generic drug or a lower-cost brand-name medication would be clinically appropriate for you.

### Highlights of our formulary changes effective Jan. 1, 2008

The copayment tier for the following drugs changed from a Tier 3 copayment to a Tier 2 (lower) copayment level: Aptivus®, Avinza®, Duetact™, Emtriva®, Epzicom™, Exelon® Patch, Letairis™, Lexiva®, ProAir® HFA, Pulmicort Flexhaler™, Revatio™, Reyataz®, Selzentry™, Seroquel XR™, Symbicort®, Tindamax®, Truvada®, Tykerb®, Tyzeka® and Zolanza®.

The medications listed below have moved to a Tier 3 copayment level, but lower-cost alternatives are available that you can discuss with your physician.

### Pharmacy Copayment Tier Changes Effective January 1, 2008

Tier 3 Medication (Higher Copayment)	Tier 2 Alternatives (Middle Copayment)	Tier 1 Alternatives (Lowest Copayment)
Actonel®, Actonel® with Calcium	Fosamax®, Fosamax Plus D™	
Genotropin®*	Nutropin®, Nutropin® AQ, Omnitrope®	
Lexapro®		citalopram, fluoxetine, paroxetine, sertraline
Prevacid®	Nexium®	omeprazole
Proventil® HFA	ProAir® HFA	

\*Please note: The Genotropin® tier change from Tier 2 to Tier 3 only applies to members with three-tier benefit plans. Genotropin®, Nutropin®, Nutropin AQ® and Omnitrope® will remain Tier 5 medications for members with five-tier benefit plans. If you're not sure whether your plan includes a three-tier or five-tier prescription drug program, check your Schedule of Benefits or call Blue Cross Customer Service at 800-599-BLUE (2583).

\*\*Express Scripts, Inc., is an independent company that assists in the administration of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana's pharmacy program.

## Leading Our State in Wellness, Diversity

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana received two recent awards recognizing the company's leadership in workplace wellness and diversity.

The Louisiana Health Care Alliance (LHCA) gave Blue Cross its 2007 Well Workplace Award for large Louisiana employers in recognition of the company's Healthy You, Healthy Blue employee wellness program.

Each year, the LHCA recognizes employers that champion the health of their employees, work to create a culture of physical activity in the workplace and inspire change by

looking beyond the criteria to new and innovative ways to inspire health.

Blue Cross' commitment to recruiting and supporting employees with disabilities won the company the title of 2007 Employer of the Year from the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. The governor's annual Disability Community Action and Leadership Award Ceremony honors organizations and individuals who show an outstanding commitment and service to persons with disabilities in Louisiana.



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Have a question about healthcare?  
Click on the **Answer Button** at  
[www.bcbsla.com](http://www.bcbsla.com).

You can also reach us by calling Customer Service at  
1-800-599-BLUE or by e-mailing us at [help@bcbsla.com](mailto:help@bcbsla.com).

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