

The Health Advisor

By Ruchi Mathur

Men & Diabetes: 6 Issues You Can't Ignore

There are currently over 18 million Americans living with diabetes and 8.7 million of them are men. Among men, uncontrolled diabetes can lead to a number of serious health issues including heart disease, amputation, stomach problems, impotence, and depression. Read on to learn about these complications and what can be done to prevent them.

Heart Disease: Men with diabetes are two or three times more likely to have heart disease than non-diabetic men. This can be prevented by controlling your blood glucose level, blood pressure and cholesterol and getting regular medical care.

Lower Extremity Amputation (LEA): African American and Latino men have high rates of amputation because of uncontrolled diabetes. Men suffer from LEA 4 times more than women. This can be prevented by checking your feet everyday and alerting your doctor if you notice any cuts, blisters, sores, swelling, or redness.

Stomach Problems (Gastroparesis): Gastroparesis is a condition when your stomach takes too long to empty because of nerve damage caused by uncontrolled diabetes. If you have persistent or prolonged heartburn, nausea, or vomiting, talk to your doctor.

Sexual Performance: About 50-60% of men with diabetes are impotent, a condition also known as erectile dysfunction (ED). ED is when a man can no longer have or keep an erection. Good care of your diabetes can prevent ED. If you have ED, know it is not the end of your sex life - there are many treatment options available. Talk to your doctor about the option that is best for you.

Depression: People with diabetes are twice as likely to experience depression as non-diabetics. Depression can keep you from managing your diabetes properly. Talk to your doctor about symptoms of depression such as loss of sexual drive, trouble sleeping, change in appetite, or loss of energy.

Alternative Treatments: Men who have diabetes often become frustrated with their doctor and the lifestyle changes needed to control diabetes so they turn to herbal and other "natural" treatments for diabetes. However, many of these treatments have dangerous side effects and may negatively interfere with prescription and over-the-counter drugs you are taking. Consult your doctor before choosing any alternative remedies.

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