9 Less Known Symptoms of Diabetes

by AFRA WILLMORE

Less Known Symptoms of Diabetes: These Symptoms May Be Warning Signs of Diabetes

Diabetes is often described as “the silent killer,” as many of the symptoms of the condition are mild and easy to dismiss. They may not seem connected or can be missed altogether.

Additionally, many of the signs of diabetes can be attributed to getting older. For instance, did you realize that urinating more often and having to get up in the night to visit the bathroom is a classic symptom of diabetes?

The kidneys work hard to expel the extra sugar floating around in your bloodstream causing you to feel the urge to go more often. This symptom is often accompanied by an increased thirst as your body tries to replenish the lost fluids. Let’s look at some other less known symptoms of diabetes.

1. Hunger

Are you hungry? Not just at mealtimes, but all the time? This might be due to fluctuating blood sugar levels – when they plummet your body craves fuel to replace the glucose it thinks have been used from cells when in fact the hormone insulin cannot transfer the glucose from your blood to the cells which need it.

This may also lead to rapid weight loss. You might be delighted to realize you are losing weight without cutting down on food or increasing exercise but in fact, this could be down to diabetes. Insulin normally gets glucose into the cells where it can be used for energy and when that system fails because of diabetes your body thinks you are starving and starts using protein from muscles for energy. You might find you lose up to 20lbs in a couple of months but it is not a healthy weight-loss and should be investigated by a doctor.

2. Itchy, Dry Skin

Suffering suddenly from itchy or dry skin or other skin conditions might be a sign that insulin resistance is causing circulatory issues. A darkening of the armpits or neck is another thing to look out for while tingling extremities or numbness, burning pain or swelling in hands or feet is also a warning sign.

3. Yeast and Fungal Infections

Annoyingly, high sugar levels can give yeast and fungal infections the perfect environment to flourish. Eye styes, athletes foot, vaginal infections, (sometimes known as “thrush”) jock itch and ringworm all thrive if glucose levels are poorly controlled.

Repeated bouts of these types of infections might warrant a visit to the doctor rather than relying on over-the-counter medications.

4. Vision Problems

Has everything gone a bit blurry or distorted? It could be time for an updated eye exam – or it could be high blood sugar levels affecting your vision. You might be seeing “floaters” or occasional flashes of light.

The good news is this is usually reversible once blood glucose is brought back under control with an improved diet, exercise and/or medication. Once diabetes is diagnosed with regular eye-care appointments will be scheduled to monitor and protect eye health.

5. Delayed Healing

You might notice that cuts, scrapes, grazes, and bruises seem to be taking longer to heal. This can be another little-known symptom of diabetes as when blood vessels have been damaged by high levels of glucose it becomes hard for blood to reach various areas of the body.

Injuries to the feet, in particular, can prove slow to heal and any slow-healing wound can cause more serious conditions like sepsis to take hold.

6. Dental Issues

Dental problems, especially affecting the gums is another often-missed indicator that blood glucose is too high. Bleeding or swollen gums, a receding gum line, bad breath, and mouth pain are all things to look out for. A visit to the dentist is vital but it might be worth also booking in for a blood test with your doctor to make sure there is no underlying cause.

7. Dizzy or Fainting Spells

Some people find they experience diabetes dizzy spells or even actually faint. Sometimes this can be a one-off due to a hot environment, stress or lack of food. More frequent episodes should be investigated as it can be caused by autonomic neuropathy- a condition that causes nerve damage in various areas of the body.

8. Fatigue

Sometimes people head to their doctor’s office because they just generally feel unwell, constantly tired or irritable. They may find they feel weak or fatigued, lose endurance or may feel sad or even depressed.

9. Other Symptoms

Other symptoms include stomach upsets, bladder and blood pressure problems, cardiovascular issues and heat intolerance and sexual dysfunction. Did you know that one-third of men diagnosed with diabetes have lower than normal levels of the male hormone, testosterone, and may find this manifests as a drop in libido?

Conclusion

Losing weight, adjusting diet or testosterone replacement therapy can all help once diagnosed. However, many people may remain undiagnosed because they attribute such symptoms to stress, the menopause or just an unavoidable part of aging instead of diabetes that could be causing them to feel this way.

Generally, if you notice any changes in your body, or how you feel it is worth mentioning it to your doctor, even if you are visiting for some other reason. A simple blood test can either put your mind at rest or if diabetes or pre-diabetes is diagnosed allow you to tackle it before too much damage is done.