

## You may have diabetes if.....

By Mitch Vance

Do you know if you may already have type II diabetes? Because type II is insidious, you can have it and not know it. Thus giving the disease time to cause considerable damage to all the systems of the body.

One statistic from the National Insurance Underwriters Association suggests by the time a patient gets an official diagnosis, they may have had the disease for at least five years and already have some degree of hardening of the arteries. This fact further accentuates the need for earlier diagnosis.

Many symptoms may be early warning signs and should be brought to the attention of your physician. These may include such conditions as frequent urination, thirst, sudden weight loss, emotional lability, mood swings, and may sometimes include erectile dysfunction if the disease has gone undiagnosed for a long time. This list goes on and on because diabetes affects every system in your body. They are frequently ignored because people may view them as inconveniences, not worthy of a trip to the doctor's office. If you have some or all of the above, the time to act is now, the sooner the better.

The earliest signs of diabetes appear in two places: the eyes and the mouth. If you have bad breath, a bad taste in your mouth, cracked lips, bleeding gums, cavities, lost teeth, you may have diabetes. Regular visits to the dentist and frequent professional cleanings will often facilitate early detection and prompt treatment. Additionally, better personal oral hygiene such as brushing and flossing several times a day improve oral health dramatically.

Annual visits to an eye care specialist may not only reveal early signs of diabetes, but may do so before **any symptoms occur**. If you have blurred or distorted vision, frequent changes in vision, dark areas or loss of vision, poor color vision, or floaters or flashes, you may have diabetes.

Often there are no early warning signs of eye disease or vision loss. The best course of action is to pay regular preventive visits to your dentist and eye care physicians. Above all, **manage your blood sugar, whether or not you have diabetes. If you think you might have it, act like you do have it.**