

# State of Michigan Employees For Your Benefit

provides a variety of timely information related to your health care benefits and needs



## Healthy changes can stop diabetes before it starts

Prediabetes is a serious health condition that can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, or stroke. People with prediabetes have blood sugar levels that are higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. Without lifestyle changes to improve their health, 15 to 30 percent of people with prediabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within five years.

### Who is likely to have prediabetes?

Most people with prediabetes don't know they have the condition. Only seven percent of the 79 million Americans with prediabetes are aware of their condition. You are most likely to develop prediabetes and type 2 diabetes if you:

- Are 45 years of age or older
- Are overweight
- Have a parent or sibling with diabetes
- Are African-American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian, Asian-American or Pacific Islander
- Developed diabetes while pregnant (gestational diabetes), or gave birth to a baby weighing nine pounds or more
- Are physically active less than three times a week
- Have glucose levels that are higher than normal
- Have a blood pressure of 140/90 or higher
- Have cholesterol (lipid) levels that aren't within the ideal range; [HDL cholesterol ("good" cholesterol) should be less than 35. Triglyceride level should be higher than 250.]
- Have skin around your neck or in your armpits that appears dark, thick and velvety
- Have blood vessel problems affecting your heart, brain or legs
- Have polycystic ovary syndrome

If you fit this profile, consult with your doctor for testing. If your blood test shows you are prediabetic you may have to have your blood glucose (blood sugar) levels checked again in six months to a year.

### You can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes

Having prediabetes doesn't mean you'll definitely develop type 2 diabetes. If you lose just 5 to 7 percent of your current weight, eat right, and become physically active, you have more than a 50 percent chance of delaying or not developing type 2 diabetes, even if you are prediabetic.

Preventing type 2 diabetes can mean a healthier and longer life without serious complications from the disease, such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure and amputations. Taking small steps like losing 10 or 15 pounds, building up to 30 minutes of physical activity daily, and following a low-calorie, low-fat food plan can help you reap the big rewards of a healthier life.

### Know your blood glucose levels

	<b>Fasting Blood Glucose Test</b> <small>(Blood test taken after 8 or more hours of fasting)</small>	<b>2-Hour Oral Glucose Tolerance Test</b> <small>(Blood tests taken 2 hours or less after drinking a glucose solution)</small>
<b>Normal</b>	Below 100	Below 140
<b>Prediabetes</b>	100-125	140-199
<b>Diabetes</b>	126 or above	200 or above



# Pink eye isn't pretty

Just because it's pink, that doesn't mean it's pretty, especially if it's conjunctivitis, sometimes known as "pink eye." Conjunctivitis is an inflammation of the thin, clear lining inside the eyelid and on the white of the eye. This inflammation gives the eye a pink or reddish color.

Conjunctivitis is a common eye condition in adults and children, with preschoolers, schoolchildren, college students, teachers and day care workers particularly at risk due to their close proximity with others in a closed environment. Luckily, conjunctivitis is also one of the most treatable ailments.

## Recovery depends on the cause

Conjunctivitis is caused by allergens and irritants, viruses or bacteria that irritate or infect the eye and eyelid lining. Allergic conjunctivitis is caused by the body's reaction to an allergen (such as pet dander or dust mites) or an irritant (such as smog or swimming pool chlorine). This type of conjunctivitis isn't contagious and will often improve on its own.

Viral conjunctivitis is caused by the same virus that causes the common cold and is very contagious. It can be spread by droplets dispersed from a cough or sneeze. With viral conjunctivitis, pink eye symptoms can last from one to two weeks and then will disappear on their own.

Antibiotic eye drops don't cure viral conjunctivitis. A warm compress to the affected eye, anti-allergen eye drops and cool artificial tears are your best bets.

Bacterial conjunctivitis is a highly contagious form of pink eye caused by bacterial infections. It's usually caused by direct contact with infected hands or items that have touched the infected eye. Bacterial conjunctivitis results in red eyes with heavy discharge. The eyelids may be glued shut when the patient awakens. An ophthalmologist will typically prescribe antibiotic eye drops or ointments to treat the infection.

## Signs and symptoms

The symptoms of conjunctivitis include:

- Redness or swelling of the white of the eye or inside the eyelid
- Increased amount of tears
- White, yellow or green eye discharge
- Itchy eyes
- Burning eyes
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Gritty feeling in the eye
- Crusting of eyelids or lashes

## Follow proper hygiene to avoid pink eye

You can greatly reduce the risk of getting or giving conjunctivitis by following simple good hygiene steps.

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- After you wash your hands, use a cloth or tissue to wash any discharge from around your eyes. Dispose of the cloth or tissue, then wash your hands again.
- Wash your hands after applying eye drops or ointment.
- Avoid touching or rubbing your eyes (you could infect the other one).
- Don't use the same eye drop dispenser or bottle for infected and non-infected eyes — even for the same person.
- Wash pillowcases, sheets, washcloths and towels in hot water and detergent, then wash your hands after handling them.
- Avoid sharing articles such as towels, blankets, and pillowcases.
- Clean your eyeglasses, being careful not to contaminate items such as towels that might be shared by other people.
- Don't share eye makeup, face make-up, make-up brushes, contact lenses and containers or eyeglasses. Toss any that you've used while infected.
- Don't use swimming pools.

For more information on conjunctivitis, visit BlueHealthConnection® by logging in to Member Secured Services on [bcbsm.com](http://bcbsm.com).

**Source:** National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, Division of Bacterial Diseases and Division of Viral Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Aug. 27, 2012.

### When Should I Call a Health Care Provider?

If you have conjunctivitis, you should see your health care provider if you have:

- Symptoms for longer than seven days
- A difference between the sizes of the pupils of your eyes
- Red skin around your eye or eyelid
- Intense redness in either or both eyes
- Your eye is red and has yellow, green or bloody discharge that doesn't improve in 24 hours
- Moderate to severe pain in either or both eyes
- Blurred vision or increased sensitivity to light
- A weakened immune system, for example, from HIV or cancer treatment
- Symptoms that continue or grow worse

## Sleep is a necessity, not a luxury

Getting enough sleep is essential to staying healthy and preventing chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity and depression. Insufficient sleep is also responsible for motor vehicle and machinery-related crashes, causing substantial injury and disability each year. In short, drowsy driving can be as dangerous — and preventable — as driving while intoxicated.

More than one-fourth of Americans report that they may occasionally not get enough sleep, while nearly 10 percent experience chronic insomnia. Do you have a sleeping problem? Look at the list below and, if you have these signs, contact your health care provider. Remember, sleep is a necessity, not a luxury.

### Sleep disorder symptoms

Are these sleeping problems a chronic issue for you? If so, contact your health care provider for help.

- ✓ You take more than 30 minutes to fall asleep.
- ✓ You wake up and can't fall back to sleep.
- ✓ You wake up too early in the morning.
- ✓ You feel tired despite sleeping seven or more hours.
- ✓ You feel sleepy during the day and fall asleep unexpectedly or at inappropriate times during the day.
- ✓ You fall asleep within five minutes if you have an opportunity to nap.
- ✓ Your bed partner says that you snore loudly, snort, or make choking sounds, or even stop breathing for short periods.
- ✓ You have creeping, tingling feelings in your legs that are relieved by moving or massaging them when you try to fall asleep.
- ✓ You have vivid, dreamlike experiences while falling asleep.
- ✓ You have episodes of sudden muscle weakness when you are angry, fearful or when you laugh.
- ✓ You feel as though you can't move when you first wake up.
- ✓ Your bed partner says that your legs or arms jerk often during sleep.
- ✓ You regularly depend on caffeinated beverages to stay awake.

**Source:** National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health, <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dph/>



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State of Michigan Employees

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## How to reach us

For benefit information or claim inquiries, call or write the BCBSM State of Michigan Customer Service Center.

## To call

1-800-843-4876

Our customer service representatives are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday excluding holidays.

## To write

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