

# WHAT:

**Diabetes** is a chronic (lifelong) disease marked by high levels of sugar in the blood.

## Causes, incidence, and risk factors

Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas to control blood sugar. Diabetes can be caused by too little insulin, resistance to insulin, or both.

To understand diabetes, it is important to first understand the normal process by which food is broken down and used by the body for energy. Several things happen when food is digested:

- A sugar called glucose enters the bloodstream. Glucose is a source of fuel for the body.
- An organ called the pancreas makes insulin. The role of insulin is to move glucose from the bloodstream into muscle, fat, and liver cells, where it can be used as fuel.

People with diabetes have high blood sugar. This is because:

- Their pancreas does not make enough insulin
- Their muscle, fat, and liver cells do not respond to insulin normally
- Both of the above

\* There are three major types of diabetes:

- Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in childhood. Many patients are diagnosed <sup>or</sup> when they are older than age 20. In this disease, the body makes little or no insulin. Daily injections of insulin are needed. The exact cause is unknown. Genetics, viruses, and autoimmune problems may play a role.
- Type 2 diabetes is far more common than type 1. It makes up most of diabetes cases. It usually occurs in adulthood, but young people are increasingly being diagnosed with this disease. The pancreas does not make enough insulin to keep blood glucose levels normal, often because the body does not respond well to insulin. Many people with type 2 diabetes do not know they have it, although it is a serious condition. *Type 2 diabetes is becoming more common due to increasing obesity and failure to exercise.*
- Gestational diabetes is high blood glucose that develops at any time during pregnancy in a woman who does not have diabetes. Women who have gestational diabetes are at high risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease later in life

# Who:

**Mountain States Health Alliance (MSHA)** is a locally owned and managed healthcare system based in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Today, MSHA is integrated both vertically and horizontally and is the **largest regional healthcare system with 13 hospitals operating at approximately \$1.0 billion in net revenues**. MSHA provides an integrated, comprehensive continuum of care to people in 29 counties in Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina.

# How:

**UVA Health System and The Health Wagon  
Conducting Free Clinics for Adults with Diabetes**

*Started Sept 2008 to*

*First Clinic, Scheduled for Sept. 26-27 in Clinchco, Will Provide Follow-Up Care  
To Patients Diagnosed with Diabetes at 2008 RAM Health Fair in Wise*

**Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corps (RAM)** is a nonprofit all volunteer medical relief corps serving remote and impoverished areas of the United States and abroad.