

More than 115,000 Nebraska children and adults have diabetes, and an additional 42,000 are undiagnosed, according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. Also, an estimated 450,000 Nebraskans have pre-diabetes, greatly increasing their risk of developing type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Type 2 diabetes is a metabolic disorder when the pancreas doesn't produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert glucose into energy.

Diabetes can lead to serious medical complications such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, amputation and blindness.

The DHHS Diabetes and Prevention Program developed a simple risk test that's free, takes less than a minute and serves as a "wake-up call" to people unaware that may already have diabetes or pre-diabetes. It is available at www.defendagainstdiabetes.ne.gov.

The U.S. medical cost of diabetes was \$116 billion in 2007. In Nebraska, the medical and indirect costs of diabetes were over \$1 billion in 2007, including \$672 million for direct costs and \$336 million for indirect costs.

The prevalence of pre-diabetes and diabetes is now at an all-time high. Approximately one out of four Nebraskans is obese, and with the holidays coming up, it's important to remember that eating moderately is one of the things you can do to defend against diabetes.

Also, because people with diabetes are more at risk for severe complications, it's important that they have their seasonal flu vaccination.