

Beat the Blitz

Broncos QB Jay Cutler didn't see diabetes coming. But now he has a battle plan and a new attitude



Could Diabetes Sideline You?

Jay Cutler played an entire NFL season without knowing he had type-1 diabetes, a disease that usually strikes in childhood. Symptoms may not be obvious in a fit adult athlete, says Keith Berkowitz, M.D., an internal-medicine specialist. Watch for these warning signs. If you experience them, go to your doctor.

Your Body

Constant thirst and frequent urination: When your kidneys can't filter and absorb excess blood sugar, you become dehydrated, so you drink more (and pee more). Drinking a lot and still being thirsty "are pretty big signs," Dr. Berkowitz says.

Weight loss and fatigue: Without insulin, sugar from food can't reach cells, so muscle and fat stores shrink. That can make you tired and irritable. "If you're not performing at your peak, something's wrong," Dr. Berkowitz says.

Your Senses

Blurred vision: High glucose levels in the blood can damage the blood vessels in the retina. If left untreated, this can cause dark spots, flashing lights, and eventually, blindness.

Tingling extremities:

High blood sugar damages capillaries that nourish nerves, especially in the feet, hands, and penis. The poor bloodflow causes a tingling sensation.