

[IMAGE]

## Irregular Menstrual Cycles May Predict Diabetes

Not all women have a regular four-week menstruation cycle; cycles can range from between 20 to 40 or more days, and in some women the cycle length changes regularly. Diabetes, a condition in which a person has higher than normal blood sugar, can cause damage to the heart, eyes, kidneys, nerves, and other organs. Unusually long, extremely irregular, or infrequent menstrual cycles may be linked to insulin resistance and the development of type 2 (or adult-onset) diabetes.

To assess the risk for type 2 diabetes in women with a history of irregular menstrual cycles, the authors of a recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* followed over 100,000 women who had reported their menstrual cycle patterns from 18-22 years of age. A "usual" cycle was considered to be 26 to 31 days; weight, race, family history, cigarette use, and other factors were also examined.

Women with long (40+ days) or irregular menstrual cycles were more than twice as likely to develop type 2 diabetes over the 10-year study period than women with usual cycles. Women with very short cycles (21 days or less) were 1.5 times more likely to develop the condition than those with normal cycles. Overweight women had a significantly increased risk for type 2 diabetes as well, but obesity could not account for the increased risk in women with irregular cycles.

Unusual menstrual cycles may indicate metabolic changes that increase a woman's risk for insulin resistance. Insulin resistance hinders a woman's ability to process sugars and can cause type 2 diabetes over time. If you typically have very long or short menstrual cycles, especially if your menstrual cycle is highly irregular, take extra precautions to prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. Talk to your doctor of chiropractic about diabetes prevention, and go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/women.html> for more information on women's health.

### *Reference:*

Solomon CG, Hu FB, Dunaif A, et al. Long or highly irregular menstrual cycles as a marker for risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2001;286(19), pp. 2421-2426.

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