Is Acanthosis Important?

Yes! People who have these skin changes are at risk for diabetes at a young age. You can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. Here are some things you can do:

- Go to the clinic and talk with your doctor or nurse about the skin changes.
- Start making changes in the foods you choose.
- Be more active.

Acanthosis helps warn people and their families to protect their health.

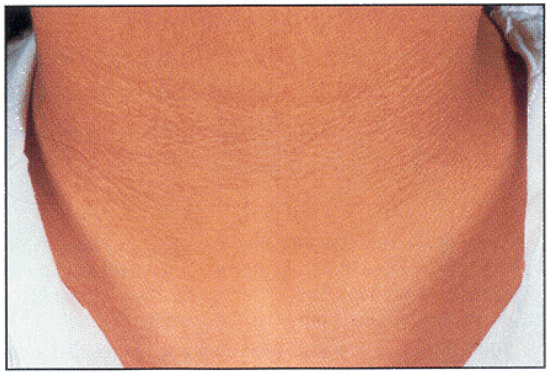
Acanthosis increases your risk for diabetes. It does not mean you have diabetes!

Everyone has some risk of developing diabetes as they get older. You can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes by increasing your physical activity and changing the foods you eat.

How do I know if I have Acanthosis?

The picture below shows the skin changes. Go to the clinic if you see the changes. Talk with your doctor or nurse.

This picture shows the front neck of a 15 year-old girl before she began eating more fruits and vegetables and walking.



This is the same girl six weeks **after** making her changes and **losing 12 pounds.**

Will the skin changes go away?

The skin changes can lessen or go away if you:

- **Eat more fruits and vegetables.**
- **Eat less sugary foods and drink less pop.**
- **Eat less fat foods like french fries, chips, and deep fried foods.**
- **Be more active**
  Walking 30 minutes on most days of the week is a simple way to be more active.
- **Lose weight**
  A weight loss of 5-10 pounds can help skin changes get lighter or go away.

Making these changes will help you and your family.

Who has these skin changes?

Both children and adults can have these skin changes. If you are overweight, you are more likely to have these skin changes.

In some tribes, as many as 30-40 percent of the people have these skin changes.

Can I get checked for these skin changes?

Yes. If you see the changes or are concerned, go to the clinic. Talk with your doctor or nurse. They can tell you more.

Where can I get more information?

This brochure has been a cooperative effort between the Montana Diabetes Project and the Billings Area Indian Health Service. Pictures were courtesy of Dr. Charles Stuart.

This brochure was funded by the Montana Diabetes Project, MT Department of Public Health & Human Services, through Cooperative Agreement #U32/CCU815663 with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999.

7,500 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of 13¢ per copy for a total cost of $975.00, which includes $975.00 for printing and $.00 for distribution.

Acanthosis Nigricans

(a-CAN tho-sis) (ni GRI-cans)

What is it?

Acanthosis describes skin changes. The skin can **look** velvety and darkened. The skin may **feel** thick and rough.

It is common among teenagers and adults. It is often found in Native Americans.

Here are common places to find the skin changes:

- **Neck**
- **Underarm**
- **Other skin folds**

This shows side view of a 15 year-old female who has Acanthosis.