

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic health condition that affects how your body turns food into energy.

Your body breaks down most of the food you eat into sugar (glucose) and releases it into your bloodstream. When your blood sugar goes up, it signals your pancreas to release insulin. Insulin acts like a key to let the blood sugar into your body's cells for use as energy.

With diabetes, your body doesn't make enough insulin or can't use it as well as it should. When there isn't enough insulin or cells stop responding to insulin, too much blood sugar stays in your bloodstream.

What Are the Types of Diabetes?

Prediabetes

In the U.S., 96 million adults – more than 1 in 3 – have prediabetes. More than 8 in 10 of them don't know they have it. With prediabetes, blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a Type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is thought to be caused by an autoimmune reaction (the body attacks itself by mistake). This reaction stops your body from making insulin. Approximately 5-10% of the people who have diabetes have Type 1. Type 1 symptoms often develop quickly. If you have Type 1 diabetes, you'll need to take insulin every day to survive. Currently, no one knows how to prevent Type 1 diabetes.

Type 2 Diabetes

With Type 2 diabetes, your body doesn't use insulin well and can't keep blood sugar at normal levels. About 90-95% of people with diabetes have Type 2. It develops over many years and is usually diagnosed in adults (but more and more in children, teens, and young adults). You may not notice any symptoms, so it's important to get your blood sugar tested if you're at risk.

Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes develops in pregnant women who have never had diabetes. If you have gestational diabetes, your baby could be at higher risk for health problems. Gestational diabetes usually goes away after your baby is born. However, it increases your risk for Type 2 diabetes later in life.

RESOURCES

American Diabetes Association

www.diabetes.org

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics

DIABETES PREVENTION: TAKE CONTROL



**HEALTHY
DIRECTIONS**

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THERE IS NO CURE FOR DIABETES.

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Risk Factors

Risk factors for Type 2 diabetes:

- Excess weight or obesity
- High cholesterol
- Family history of diabetes

African American, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian, or Alaska Native persons are also at higher risk.

Reduce Your Risk

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed with healthy lifestyle changes, such as:

- Losing weight – The American Diabetes Association recommends that people with prediabetes lose at least 7% to 10% of their body weight to prevent disease progression.
- Eating healthy food – Eat a variety of healthy, fiber-rich foods, which include, fruits, non-starchy vegetables, legumes, and whole grains.
- Being physically active – Exercise can help you lose weight, lower your blood sugar, and boost your sensitivity to insulin, which helps keep your blood sugar within a normal range.

Symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes

Symptoms of Type 2 diabetes often develop slowly. In fact, you can be living with Type 2 diabetes for years and not know it. When symptoms are present, they may include:

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Increased hunger
- Unintended weight loss
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing sores
- Frequent infections
- Numbness or tingling in the hands or feet

When to See Your Doctor

Consult your healthcare professional if you meet any of the following criteria:

- Over the age of 45
- Under 45, but are overweight and have other risk factors
- Have had gestational diabetes
- Been diagnosed with pre-diabetes
- Are a child who is overweight or obese and has other risk factors



Major Complications

High blood sugar can cause serious health problems:

- Eye problems – If untreated, complications from diabetes can lead to sight loss.
- Foot problems – Nerve damage and poor circulation can lead to amputation if untreated.
- Heart attack and stroke – High blood sugar can damage your blood vessels increasing your risk of heart trouble.
- Kidney problems – High blood sugar and high blood pressure make it harder for your kidneys to clear extra fluid and waste from your body.
- Nerve damage – Diabetes can make it harder for the nerves to carry messages between the brain and every part of the body.
- Gum disease and other mouth problems – Too much sugar in your blood can lead to more sugar in your saliva, which attacks your tooth enamel and damages your gums.

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By the Numbers

- A 7% reduction in body weight can reduce the risk of diabetes by 60%.
- Do 30 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, swimming, biking or running, each day.
- Do resistance exercise — weight lifting, yoga, and calisthenics — at least 2 to 3 times a week.
- Take a few minutes to stand, walk around or do some light activity every 30 minutes.
- More than 37 million, about 1 in 10, Americans have diabetes.



**EAT RIGHT,
EXERCISE,
MAINTAIN A
HEALTHY WEIGHT,
AND STAY
DIABETES FREE!**