



What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic (long-lasting) disease that affects how your body turns food into energy. Most of the food you eat is broken down into sugar (also called glucose) and released into your bloodstream. Your pancreas makes a hormone called insulin, which acts like a key to let the blood sugar into your body's cells for use as energy. If you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make enough insulin or can't use the insulin it makes 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, which over time can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, vision loss and kidney disease.

In the last 20 years, the number of adults diagnosed with diabetes has more than tripled as the American population has aged and has struggled with weight. It is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S.

There isn't a cure yet for diabetes, but healthy lifestyle habits, taking medicine as needed, getting diabetes self-management education and keeping appointments with your healthcare team can greatly reduce its impact on your life.

Types of diabetes.

Prediabetes is a serious health condition where blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as diabetes. Prediabetes increases your risk for type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. In the U.S., more than 1 in 3 adults have prediabetes, and 90% of them don't know they have it. You can prevent or reverse prediabetes with simple, proven lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, eating healthier and getting regular physical activity.

You are at risk for prediabetes if you:

- Are overweight
- Are 45 years of age or older
- Have a parent, brother or sister with type 2 diabetes
- Are physically active less than three times a week
- Have ever had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or given birth to a baby who weighed more than nine pounds
- Are African American, Hispanic/Latino American, American Indian or Alaska Native (some Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans are also at higher risk)

Type 1 diabetes is caused by an autoimmune reaction (the body attacks itself by mistake) that stops your body from making insulin. About 5% of the people who have diabetes have type 1. Symptoms of type 1 diabetes often develop quickly. It's usually diagnosed in children, teens and young adults. There is a greater risk of developing diabetes if you have a family history of the condition. In the United States, Caucasians are more likely to develop type 1 diabetes than African Americans and Hispanic/ Latino Americans.

Currently, no one knows how to prevent type 1 diabetes. If you have type 1 diabetes, you'll need to take insulin every day to survive.

With **type 2 diabetes**, your body doesn't use insulin well and is unable to keep blood sugar at normal levels. Most people with diabetes—9 in 10—have type 2 diabetes. It develops over many years and is usually diagnosed in adults (though increasingly in children, teens and young adults).

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You may not notice any symptoms, so it's important to get your blood sugar tested if you're at risk. Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed with healthy lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, healthy eating and getting regular physical activity. You're at risk for developing type 2 diabetes if you:

- Have prediabetes
- Are overweight
- Are 45 years of age or older
- Have a parent, brother or sister with type 2 diabetes
- Are physically active less than three times a week
- Have ever had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or given birth to a baby who weighed more than nine pounds
- Are African American, Hispanic/Latino American, American Indian or Alaska Native (some Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans are also at higher risk)

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 complications. Gestational diabetes usually goes away after your baby is born, but increases your risk for type 2 diabetes later in life. Your baby is more likely to have issues with weight as a child or teen, and more likely to develop type 2 diabetes later in life too.

These articles are not a substitute for medical advice and are not intended to treat or cure any disease. Advances in medicine may cause this information to become outdated, invalid or subject to debate. Professional opinions and interpretations of scientific literature may vary. Consult your healthcare professional before making changes to your diet, exercise or medication regimen. Sources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/eat-well/what-to-eat.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/beactive.html>
- https://www.trividiahealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NICO3683_MeetLance_BGM_Ad_TearPad1.pdf
- https://www.trividiahealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NICO3684_MeetLance_HelpfulTestingTips_Ad_TearPad.pdf
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