

What is Diabetes?

When you have diabetes, your body can't use the energy from the food you eat. Your body has a problem making and using insulin. Insulin is a hormone that helps your body use blood sugar. There are two main types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2.

- ***In type 1 diabetes, your body makes little or no insulin.***
- ***In type 2 diabetes, your body usually makes insulin but your body cannot use it well.***

In both types of diabetes, sugar builds up in your blood because it cannot be used. Sugar stays in your blood and you have high blood sugar levels. High blood sugar levels can damage your blood vessels and nerves, and over a long period of time can result in serious health problems. By keeping your blood sugar levels as close to normal as possible you may lower your chances of having:

- Eye problems
- Kidney problems
- Foot and /or leg amputation
- Sexual problems
- Heart attack and stroke

Gestational diabetes is when you have high blood sugar during pregnancy. About 3-5% of all pregnant women in the U.S. are diagnosed with gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes is due to changes in women during pregnancy. Talk to

your doctor about gestational diabetes if you are pregnant.

Type 1 diabetes

People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin shots to control their blood sugar. Type 1 diabetes usually begins when people are young but it may occur at any age.

Causes are related to:

- A history of type 1 diabetes in the family
- A problem within the body that causes insulin-making cells to be destroyed

Symptoms:

- Increased thirst
- Increased urination
- Increased hunger
- Sudden weight loss
- Feeling very tired

Ketoacidosis is a serious problem that usually occurs only in people with type 1 diabetes.

Warning signs that you may be in Ketoacidosis are :

- feel more hungry and thirsty than usual,
- throw up or have stomach pain,
- fruity smell on your breath,
- your breathing is fast and deep,
- fever.
- Change color on the strip when you test your urine
- Blood sugar level of 240 mg/dl or more.

You should not try to treat Ketoacidosis yourself! Call your doctor immediately !

Type 2 diabetes

People who have type 2 diabetes can be treated with proper meal planning and exercise, oral medicines, and/or insulin. Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes. Although it can occur in younger people, Type 2 diabetes is more likely to occur in people who:

- Are over 40 years of age
- Are overweight
- Have a family history of diabetes
- Have had diabetes during a pregnancy
- Have given birth to a baby weighing over 9 pounds
- Have the stress of an illness or injury
- Have high blood pressure
- Are African American, Hispanic American, Native American



Symptoms include:

- Feeling tired
- Dry, itchy skin
- Numbness or tingling in hands or feet
- Frequent infections
- Increased urination
- Blurred vision
- Problems with sexual functioning
- Slow healing of cuts or sores

Type 2 diabetes often has no symptoms. If you or any member of your family who has three or more of the above symptoms you should be tested for diabetes.

What is Hypoglycemia?

Hypoglycemia or low blood sugar is when your blood sugar is lower than usual or below 70 mg/dl.

Symptoms of hypoglycemia are:

- feel shaky, sweat and chills
- feel tired
- Hungry
- Have a fast heartbeat
- become confused
- have blurred vision or a headache
- *have no symptoms at all.*

Treating hypoglycemia

You need to treat low blood sugar right away. If your blood sugar is low (less than 70 mg/dl) and you are not pregnant, take one of the following right away:

- half a cup of fruit juice or regular soda (not sugar free),
- 1 tablespoon of honey or sugar.

If you don't feel better in 15 minutes, eat something with sugar in it again. If your blood sugar is still low, call your doctor immediately.

What is Hyperglycemia?

Hyperglycemia or high blood sugar is when your blood sugar levels are higher than usual or above 120 mg/dl before meals or above 180 mg/dl after meals. If this happens often, it is a problem that needs attention.

Symptoms of hyperglycemia are:

- more hunger or thirst than usual
- urinate often especially at night
- dry or itchy skin
- feeling tired or sleepy
- blurred vision
- frequent infections.

Treating hyperglycemia may include a change in medicines or doses, more careful meal planning and regular exercise.



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What Is Diabetes?

This pamphlet was designed to help you understand diabetes. It does not replace your doctors recommendations.

