



Type 2 Diabetes

What You Need to Know

Did you know that many people who have diabetes don't know it?

Many people do not find out they have the disease until they have diabetes problems, such as blurred vision or heart trouble. If you find out early that you have diabetes, you can get treatment to prevent damage to your body.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes means you have too much glucose, also called sugar, in your blood. Glucose is a form of sugar your body uses for energy. Too much glucose in your blood can damage your body over time. Diabetes can cause heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease, blindness, dental disease, amputations, and other serious health problems.

What is type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes occurs because the body doesn't use the hormone insulin properly. Insulin helps your body absorb glucose and use it for energy. If your body doesn't make enough insulin or doesn't use insulin properly, you have a condition called insulin resistance. Insulin resistance requires the body to produce higher levels of insulin. Over time, the body cannot keep up with the demand for extra insulin and type 2 diabetes develops.

You are more likely to get type 2 diabetes if you

- are age 45 or older
- are overweight
- are physically inactive
- have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- have high blood pressure or high cholesterol—blood fat
- have abnormal levels of HDL, or good, cholesterol or triglycerides—another type of blood fat
- had gestational diabetes—diabetes that develops only during pregnancy—or gave birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- have prediabetes—meaning your blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough to be called diabetes
- are African American, Alaska Native, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, or Pacific Islander American
- have polycystic ovary syndrome, also called PCOS
- have a dark, velvety rash around your neck or armpits
- have blood vessel problems affecting your heart, brain, or legs





How do I know if I have diabetes?

Your doctor can test your blood to see if you have diabetes. Some people have signs of diabetes, such as being extra thirsty, having to urinate often, or feeling tired. Others have no signs at all.

How can I take care of my diabetes?

You can take care of your diabetes by reaching your targets for blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Talk with your doctor about setting your target numbers for all three and how to reach them. Here are some ways to reach your targets:

- Make wise food choices. Choose fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, lean meats, and low-fat dairy products. Learn when to eat and how much to have.
- Be physically active for 30 to 60 minutes most days, such as taking a brisk walk. Spend less time watching TV or sitting at the computer. Two times a week do activities to strengthen muscles and bone, such as lifting weights or sit-ups.
- Reach and stay at a healthy weight. Making wise food choices and being active can help you control your weight.
- Take your medicines as prescribed and keep taking them, even after you've reached your targets.
- Ask your doctor if you should take a low-dose aspirin every day to prevent a heart attack or stroke.
- If you smoke, get help to quit.

Where can I get more information about diabetes?

National Diabetes Education Program

1 Diabetes Way
Bethesda, MD 20814-9692
Phone: 1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337)
TTY: 1-866-569-1162
Fax: 703-738-4929
Email: ndep@mail.nih.gov
Internet: www.ndep.nih.gov
www.yourdiabetesinfo.org

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse

1 Information Way
Bethesda, MD 20892-3560
Phone: 1-800-860-8747
TTY: 1-866-569-1162
Fax: 703-738-4929
Email: ndic@info.niddk.nih.gov
Internet: www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

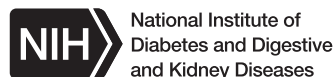
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The NIDDK Awareness and Prevention Series
Materials for Community Health Fairs



The NIDDK Awareness and Prevention Series is designed to make you ask yourself, "Could this be me or someone I care for?" So take a closer look. Additional information on this topic and other titles in the series is available through the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse or on the Internet at www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov.



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