



MARCH Diabetes awareness

What are the two main types of diabetes?

Diabetes makes your blood sugar (also called glucose) rise too high. The hormone insulin carries energy from food to your cells. If your body doesn't make enough insulin, or can't use it well, too much sugar stays in your blood, which can damage your organs.

The diabetes treatment you receive depends on which type you have:

With **type 1 diabetes** your body doesn't produce insulin, because your immune system harms the cells that make it. This type of diabetes usually occurs in younger people, although it can appear later in life. Only 5 percent of people with diabetes have type 1.

With **type 2 diabetes** your body doesn't use insulin properly, so your pancreas can't make enough to hold your blood sugar at normal levels. This type of diabetes typically develops when people are older, but it's being diagnosed more often in children now, too.

Sources: American Diabetes Association, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Trivia time:

Of all the people with diabetes, how many aren't aware that they have it?

Answer: About one third

How to support a loved one with diabetes

Diabetes can be a difficult disease to handle alone. People cope better with the support of family and friends.

Here are some ways you can be there for someone with diabetes:

- > Learn about the disease.
- > Be sympathetic. A diabetes diagnosis can be upsetting.
- > Eat well. Share meals and eat the same nutritious food as your loved one.
- > Ask what they need: Would you like me to prepare meals or go with you to your doctor? What can I do to help?

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia – understanding the difference

Hyperglycemia is the term for high blood sugar. It happens when your body has too little insulin or can't use insulin properly. Two common signs are frequent urination and increased thirst.

Hypoglycemia is when your blood sugar is abnormally low. Signs can vary from person to person but might include shakiness, nausea, sweating, chills, dizziness, confusion, a rapid heartbeat and more.

Sources: American Diabetes Association, American Foundation for the Blind

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True or False? Myths about the diabetes diet

Having diabetes doesn't mean giving up all your favorite foods. See if you can answer true or false to these three statements about eating well with diabetes:

- > You can eat the same nutritious foods as your family
True — Choose healthy whole grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, lean meats, poultry and fish.
- > You have to give up carbohydrates.
False — Everyone needs some carbs. Aim to eat the same amount of carbohydrate at the same time every day to maintain your blood sugar levels.
- > You can enjoy favorite treats from time to time.
True — Manage cravings by following a healthy eating plan and including a few special-occasion foods.

Sources: Group Health Cooperative, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Trivia time:

Are there are only two types of diabetes?

Answer: No. Type 1 and type 2 diabetes are the most common, but there are more, including gestational diabetes.

4 ways to lower your risk of diabetes

Many people with type 2 diabetes don't realize they have it. By being aware of your risk factors, you can improve your quality of life.

You can take steps to lower your risk in these areas:

- > Being overweight or obese: Lose just 5 percent of your body weight to cut your risk significantly.
- > Physical inactivity: Get at least 50 minutes of moderate exercise three times a week.
- > High blood pressure: Control your blood pressure to take strain off your heart.
- > Abnormal cholesterol levels: Make a nutritious eating plan and take medication if necessary.

These risk factors can't be changed:

- > Family history: You may have a blood relative with diabetes.
- > Race or ethnic background: If you identify as African-American, Asian-American, Latino/Hispanic, Native American or Pacific Islander, your risk may be higher.
- > Age: People older than 45 have a higher risk.
- > Gestational diabetes: If you developed diabetes during pregnancy your risk may be higher.

Sources: American Heart Association, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

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