



> Diabetes

March

Do you know the two types of diabetes?

Diabetes causes your blood glucose (sugar) to rise too high. This is because your body isn't making – or can't properly use – insulin, the hormone that helps carry glucose to your cells for energy.

If diabetes isn't treated, it can lead to serious problems with your blood vessels, heart, nerves, kidneys, mouth, eyes and feet.

Two types of diabetes

Type 1 diabetes affects only about 5 percent of those with the disease. It develops most often in young people. With this type, your body doesn't make enough, or any, insulin.

Type 2 diabetes is much more common. It typically starts when people are older, but these days, it's being diagnosed more often in children, too. With type 2 diabetes, your body can't properly use insulin to carry glucose to the cells.

Both types of diabetes cause glucose to build up to unhealthy levels in your blood.

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

How to help a loved one with diabetes

Diabetes is a hard disease to handle alone. People can cope with it better when they have the support of family and friends. Here are some things you can do to help a loved one with diabetes:

- > Learn about the disease and how a person can manage it.
- > Be sympathetic – a diabetes diagnosis can be scary and upsetting.
- > Ask your loved one if he or she would like reminders about doctor visits, checking blood sugar and taking medicine.
- > Help him or her write a list of questions for the health care team.
- > Learn which foods your loved one should avoid, and help him or her make healthy meals.
- > Offer to exercise together. Taking walks, for example, is a great way to handle stress and have time to talk.
- > Learn how to recognize the symptoms of high and low blood sugar levels.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Trivia time:

Before synthetic insulin was created, what was used to treat diabetes?

Answer: Insulin from cattle and pigs.



> Diabetes

March

Are you at risk for diabetes?

Among people with diabetes, 95 percent have type 2. Some of the risk factors for type 2 are beyond your control, while others are within your control.

These risk factors can't be changed:

- > Family history. You have one or more blood relatives with diabetes.
- > Race or ethnic background. You are of African-American, Asian-American, Latino/Hispanic-American, Native American or Pacific Islander descent.
- > Age. You are older than 45.
- > Gestational diabetes. You developed diabetes during pregnancy.

These are risk factors you can do something about:

- > Being overweight or obese. Cut your risk by losing just 5 to 7 percent of your body weight.
- > Physical inactivity. Get at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise each week.
- > High blood pressure. Take steps to get your blood pressure under control.
- > Abnormal cholesterol levels. Improve your levels through diet, exercise and medication (if your doctor recommends it).

Source: American Heart Association

Trivia time:

Can you name three celebrities that have, or have had, diabetes?

Answer: Bret Michaels, Nick Jonas, George Lucas, Drew Carey, Paula Deen, Neil Young, Tom Hanks.
Bonus: Salma Hayek had gestational diabetes.

A healthy diet is also a diabetes diet

If you have diabetes, the same healthy diet that's good for everyone is good for you. It doesn't mean you can't ever eat any of your favorite foods, as long as you make lots of nutritious, healthy choices. These include:

- > Whole grain products
- > Legumes like dried beans and lentils
- > Fresh fruits and vegetables
- > Low-fat or nonfat dairy products
- > Lean meat, poultry and fish
- > Meat alternatives like tofu and tempeh

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia – understanding the difference

Hyperglycemia means having high blood glucose. 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 they might include shakiness, anxiety, sweating, chills, lightheadedness, confusion, a rapid heartbeat and more.

If not treated, both conditions can cause serious problems, including coma or even death.

Source: American Diabetes Association