



What is diabetes?

Diabetes is when your body has trouble regulating insulin (a hormone produced in your pancreas) and causes your blood glucose (sugar) to rise higher than normal. You may hear this called hyperglycemia.

Your body breaks food down into glucose when you eat. Your body then sends the glucose into the blood. Insulin helps move the glucose from the blood into your cells to use as fuel for energy right away or to store for later.

When a person has diabetes, there is a problem with insulin, but not everyone has the same problem or requires the same treatment. Your body either doesn't make enough insulin, can't use insulin it makes well or both. Diabetes may be treated with insulin, medications, diet and exercise. If left untreated, diabetes can lead to serious complications like nerve damage, kidney or eye problems, heart disease and stroke. However, a person can live a long, healthy life if managed well.

There are three types of diabetes:

Type 1 Diabetes

Your immune system mistakenly destroys the beta-cells that produce the hormone insulin in your pancreas. Your body treats the beta-cells as foreign invaders and destroys them. After a while, your body destroys enough beta cells that your pancreas stops making insulin (or makes very little). When this happens, you need to take insulin to live.

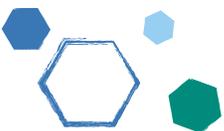
Type 2 Diabetes

Your body is insulin-resistant, meaning your body does not use insulin the way it should. The beta-cells that produce the hormone insulin in your pancreas make extra insulin. Over time, your pancreas cannot keep up insulin production and stops making enough insulin to keep your blood glucose levels normal.

Some people with type 2 diabetes can manage their diabetes by eating healthy and exercising. Some people need to take oral medicines (pills) or insulin to help keep glucose levels steady. Diabetes is a progressive disease – even if you don't need medications at first, it doesn't mean you won't need them over time.

Gestational Diabetes (GDM)

This type of diabetes develops during pregnancy. For most women, blood glucose levels will return to normal after having their baby. If you have had GDM, you are at a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life. Checking your blood glucose levels, maintaining a healthy diet and exercise and talking with your doctor regularly can help prevent type 2 diabetes.



Know the warning signs



Common symptoms to watch for:

- Urinating often
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry, even after eating
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Cuts and bruises that are slow to heal
- Weight loss, even though you are eating more (type 1)
- Tingling, pain or numbness in the hands or feet (type 2)

Some people with type 2 diabetes have symptoms so mild they go unnoticed. Regular wellness check-ups with your doctor can help you detect any problems.

Diabetes management

Know your **ABCs** of diabetes and work with your healthcare team to make a plan for your diabetes goals.

A1C

Check your A1C to know your average blood glucose and a snapshot of the past few months.

Blood Pressure

Keep track of your blood pressure numbers. These numbers tell you the force of blood inside your blood vessels. If your blood pressure is high, your heart must work harder.

Cholesterol

Cholesterol numbers tell you how much fat is in your blood. HDL helps protect your heart while LDL and triglycerides can clog your blood vessels and lead to heart disease and an increased risk for heart attack or stroke.

Visit with your primary care provider (PCP) for more information about diabetes management. To find a provider or view your benefits, visit blueprintportal.com.



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The Diabetes Care information is provided to you for health education purposes only. We do not offer medical advice or medical services. Always consult your treating physician(s) for any medical advice or services you need. You, as the member, are responsible for selecting providers, services or products. Please check your member benefits for coverage of services.

Source: American Diabetes Association, diabetes.org