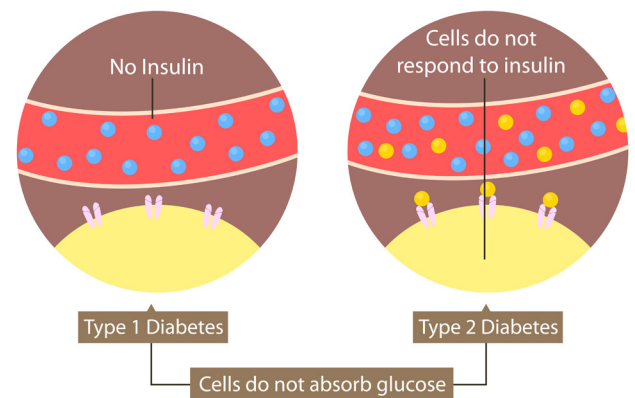


ALL ABOUT DIABETES.

There are 2 types of diabetes - type 1 and type 2.

A diagnosis of type 1 diabetes usually happens in childhood. In this type of diabetes, the immune system attacks insulin-producing cells in the pancreas so that the pancreas can no longer produce insulin. Insulin is the hormone that triggers your cells to take up glucose (their primary energy source) from your blood. The symptoms often appear suddenly.

Type 2 diabetes is more commonly diagnosed after the age of 45, and symptoms appear gradually. Many people do not know they have type 2 diabetes, and so they do not take measures to manage it. In type 2 diabetes, the body cannot use insulin correctly. The receptors in your cells do not properly receive the message to take in glucose and remove it from the bloodstream. In time, your body may stop producing insulin.



To be diagnosed with diabetes, a visit to a doctor for a blood glucose test is required. The blood test needs to be a fasting blood test which means no food can be consumed for a specified period (usually 8 hours) before the test.

Guidelines - Norms for blood glucose levels (BGL)

If your fasting test result is between 3.8 - 6.4 mmol/L then your blood glucose levels are normal. If you have other risk factors such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure, you should attend checkups with your doctor regularly to monitor your blood glucose levels.

If your result is 5.6 to 6.9 mmol/L, you could be diagnosed with pre-diabetes. This reading is not high enough to be considered type 2 diabetes yet, but without lifestyle changes, adults and children with pre-diabetes are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes.

If you have two separate fasted tests, both with a blood glucose reading of 7mmol/L or more, you may be diagnosed with diabetes. This may also occur if a random blood glucose level is taken and the result is over 11.1 mmol/L.

Health risks associated with diabetes

People with diabetes can experience high blood glucose levels (hyperglycaemia) or low blood glucose levels (hypoglycaemia) which are glucose levels outside of the target range. Hypoglycemia is when the blood glucose level is below 4mmol/L. Hyperglycemia is when blood glucose level rises above 7mmol/L when fasted or over 11mmol/L two hours after a meal.

If not managed, BGLs outside of your target range can be harmful to your body and can lead to long term health complications. If left unmanaged, BGLs that are too high or too low can cause skin conditions, poor wound healing, vision loss, nerve damage, kidney disease and even heart attack and stroke.

Maintaining your BGLs within your target range is important for ongoing health and wellbeing as well as reducing your risk of diabetes-related complications.

It is important to know that people with diabetes or pre-diabetes have different target ranges. Your diabetes health team can advise the target range is right for you based on your age, type of diabetes, medications and other factors.

Causes of type 2 diabetes

Causes of type 2 diabetes are mostly related to lifestyle factors. Diet and physical activity play a large role in contributing to risk factors to developing diabetes.

Poor diet and excessive energy intake can contribute to high cholesterol, high blood pressure and weight gain, all of which are risk factors for diabetes.

Being overweight or obese can increase your chances of developing diabetes. The more fatty tissue there is in the body, the higher the cells resistance to insulin.

People who have a family history of diabetes are at a higher risk of developing the disease. Those who have people in their families who have diabetes should get regular checkups with their doctor to monitor their blood glucose levels.

Resistance to insulin happens over a long time period across a wide range of lifestyle factors. Diagnosis of diabetes tends to happen later in life therefore age is also a risk factor for diabetes.

Rather than viewing pre-diabetes as a precursor to diabetes, see it as a motivator for making changes to reduce your risk. You can reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes by up to 60% by making healthy food choices, being more active, and maintaining a healthy weight.

Reducing your risk of type 2 diabetes

- **Manage your weight.** Excess body fat, particularly if stored around the abdomen, can increase the body's resistance to the hormone insulin. This can lead to type 2 diabetes.
- **Exercise regularly.** Moderate physical activity on most days of the week helps manage weight, reduce blood glucose levels and may also improve blood pressure and cholesterol.
- **Eat a balanced, healthy diet.** Reduce the amount of fat in your diet, especially saturated and trans fats. Eat more fruit, vegetables and high fibre foods. Cut back on salt.
- **Limit takeaway and processed foods.** Convenience or ready to eat meals and fast food are usually high in salt, fat and kilojoules. It's best to cook for yourself using fresh ingredients whenever possible. Do some research and select healthier convenience meals.
- **Limit your alcohol intake.** Too much alcohol can lead to weight gain and may increase your blood pressure and triglyceride levels. Men should have no more than two standard drinks a day and women should have no more than one.
- **Quit smoking.** Smokers are twice as likely to develop diabetes as non-smokers.



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