

## What You Should Know About Diabetes

**What is diabetes?** Diabetes is a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. Diabetes is a chronic disease that **has no cure**. Diabetes can lead to serious complications and premature death, but people with diabetes can take steps to control the disease and lower the risk of complications. There are two types of diabetes: Type 1 and Type 2.

**Type 1 diabetes** develops when the body's immune system destroys pancreatic beta cells, the only cells in the body that make the hormone insulin that regulates blood glucose. To survive, people with type 1 diabetes must have insulin delivered by injection or a pump. This form of diabetes usually strikes children and young adults, although disease onset can occur at any age. Type 1 diabetes accounts for 5% to 10% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. Risk factors for type 1 diabetes may be autoimmune, genetic, or environmental. There is no known way to prevent type 1 diabetes. Several clinical trials of methods of the prevention of type 1 diabetes are currently in progress or are being planned.

**Type 2 diabetes** accounts for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. It usually begins as insulin resistance, a disorder in which the cells do not use insulin properly. As the need for insulin rises, the pancreas gradually loses its ability to produce it. Type 2 diabetes is associated with older age, obesity, family history of diabetes, history of gestational diabetes, impaired glucose metabolism, physical inactivity, and race/ethnicity.

**Who is at greater risk for Type 1 diabetes?** Children & siblings of people with type 1 diabetes.

**Who is at greater risk for Type 2 diabetes?** People with impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) / impaired fasting glucose (IFG); People over age 45 and/or a family history of diabetes; People who are overweight and who do not exercise regularly; People with low HDL cholesterol or high triglycerides, high blood pressure; Certain racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Non-Hispanic Blacks, Hispanic/Latino Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaska Natives); Women who had gestational diabetes, or who have had a baby weighing 9 pounds or more at birth; Recurring skin, gum, or bladder infections.

**Warning signs of Type 1 diabetes:** Frequent urination, unusual thirst, extreme hunger, unusual weight loss, extreme fatigue, irritability.

**Warning signs of Type 2 diabetes:** Any of the type 1 symptoms, frequent infections, blurred vision, cuts/bruises slow to heal, tingling/numbness in the hands/feet. Often people with type 2 diabetes have no symptoms.

Visit the following diabetes website [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) where you'll find more information on the disease. Also make sure to take the Risk Test to see if you are at risk for diabetes.

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