



Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes Information for Members

What is Type 1 Diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes is a disease. It starts when the pancreas stops making insulin. Insulin lets blood sugar enter the body's cells to be used for energy. The cells can't get the sugar they need without it. Then too much sugar builds up in the blood. Diabetes can cause sudden or long-term problems. If the body doesn't have enough insulin and blood sugar gets too high

...

- A serious problem can occur
- It is called diabetic ketoacidosis
- It can be deadly

High blood sugar can damage ...

- The eyes
- Heart
- Blood vessels
- Nerves
- Kidneys

Type 1 diabetes can occur at any age. But it usually starts in children or young adults. That's why it used to be called juvenile diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is more common. Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are different. In type 1, the body stops making insulin. In Type 2, the body does not make enough insulin or can't use insulin the right way. All people with Type 1 diabetes need to take insulin. Some people with Type 2 diabetes also need it. However, most people can use diet, exercise and medicine to treat that illness. There isn't a cure for Type 1 diabetes. But people with Type 1 diabetes can live long and healthy lives with treatment.

What Causes It?

The body makes insulin in beta cells. These cells are in the pancreas. Type 1 diabetes starts because the body destroys the beta cells. Experts don't know why this happens. Some people have a greater chance of getting Type 1 diabetes because they have a close family member who has it. But most people with the illness don't have a family history of it.

What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms of Type 1 diabetes are:

- Being very thirsty
- Urinating a lot
- Losing weight without trying
- Being hungrier than usual (sometimes)

These symptoms usually appear over a few days or weeks. Sometimes people notice symptoms after an illness like the flu. They may think that they are not feeling well because of the flu and don't seek care soon enough. Waiting too long to

get care can lead to diabetic ketoacidosis, and symptoms of this problem include:

- Flushed, hot, dry skin
- Not feeling hungry
- Belly pain
- Vomiting
- A strong, fruity breath odor (similar to nail polish remover)
- Fast and shallow breathing
- Restlessness, drowsiness or trouble waking up
- Confusion

How is it Diagnosed?

A doctor asks questions about the person's health and does an exam. A blood test measures the person's blood sugar. Some people are diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes because they have symptoms of the following problem:

- Diabetic ketoacidosis

How is it Treated?

Treatment focuses on keeping blood sugar levels as close to the normal range as possible. A person with type 1 diabetes needs to:

- Take insulin through daily shots or an insulin pump
- Eat a healthy diet that includes carbohydrate throughout the day
- Check blood sugar levels several times a day
- Get regular exercise

What happens when a small child has diabetes? The parents have the responsibility for blood sugar control. As the child grows, he or she can take over more of the care. Treatment may change over time.

Can Type 1 Diabetes Be Prevented?

There is no way to prevent it. But studies are being done. These seek to find ways to prevent or delay it in people who are most likely to get it. Tight control of blood sugar and blood pressure can help people with type 1 diabetes prevent or delay problems.

What is Type 2 Diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is a lifelong disease. It happens when ...

- The cells of your body can't use insulin the right way, or
- When the pancreas can't make enough insulin

Insulin lets blood sugar enter the body's cells to be used for energy. When it can't do its job, the cells can't get the sugar they need. Then too much sugar builds up in the blood.

High blood sugar can damage ...

- The eyes
- Heart
- Blood vessels
- Nerves
- Kidneys

More and more adults and children are getting type 2 diabetes. This is largely because of poor eating habits and a lack of physical activity. It is important to know if you or your children are at risk for type 2 diabetes. Know what you can do to help prevent it.

What Causes Type 2 Diabetes?

You can get type 2 diabetes if:

- Your body does not respond properly to insulin
- Your pancreas does not make enough insulin

Your weight, how active you are, and your family history all affect the way your body responds to insulin. You are at greater risk of getting type 2 diabetes if:

- You are overweight
- You get little or no exercise
- You have family members with diabetes

What are the Symptoms?

Some people don't have symptoms. This is because the blood sugar level may rise so slowly that a person may not know that anything is wrong. Other people may have symptoms, such as:

- Being very thirsty.
- Urinating a lot.
- Losing weight without trying.
- Having blurry vision.
- Feeling hungrier or more tired than usual.

Sometimes a person finds out that he or she has type 2 diabetes during a regular medical checkup. Or people may find out that they have it during an appointment for another health problem. Some people don't find out that they have diabetes until they have a complication from the disease, such as:

- Vision problems
- Kidney disease
- Nerve disease
- Heart and blood vessel problems

How is it Diagnosed?

If your doctor thinks that you have type 2 diabetes, he or she will ...

- Ask you questions about your medical history
- Do a physical exam
- Order a blood sugar test

A blood sugar test checks how much sugar is in your blood. The test is usually done first thing in the morning before you eat or drink anything.

How is it Treated?

What is the key to treating type 2 diabetes? Controlling blood sugar levels. All of the following help to lower blood sugar:

- Eating healthy foods, such as foods lower in sugars or fats
- Losing weight, if you are overweight
- Getting regular exercise
- In some cases, taking medicines

Treatment also means checking blood sugar levels. This is to make sure that the disease is under control. It is important to watch for signs of high and low blood sugar. Both can cause problems. Both need to be treated. People with diabetes need regular checkups. This is to make sure their treatment is working and that they do not get more serious health problems.

Can Type 2 Diabetes Be Prevented?

Those at risk may be able to prevent diabetes. They can do this by getting regular exercise and paying attention to what and how much you eat. Losing a little weight (10 to 20 pounds) can go a long way toward preventing or delaying the disease.

References

Healthwise, Incorporated. Type 1 Diabetes. Author: Carline Rea, RN, BS, MS. Medical Review: Caroline S. Rhoads, MD (Internal Medicine), Stephen LaFranchi, MD (Pediatrics and Pediatric Endocrinology). November 21, 2006.

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