

Your  
Journal

# Understanding Diabetes

The TV Series

## HEALTHY BODY HEALTHY MIND

[www.HealthyBodyHealthyMind.com](http://www.HealthyBodyHealthyMind.com)

*Produced By:*



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# UNDERSTANDING DIABETES

Diabetes is an incurable condition that impacts blood sugar levels and can lead to life-threatening complications. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 21 million people in the United States have diabetes and six million of them don't know it.

There are two main forms of diabetes, both of which interfere with the body's ability to convert sugar into energy. When we eat, the digestive process turns carbohydrates, starches, and sugars into a simple sugar called glucose. In healthy people, a hormone called insulin helps the body's cells make use of glucose. In people with diabetes, the body either can't make enough insulin or can't use it appropriately. This can lead to a dangerous build-up of glucose in the blood.

## Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes typically develops during childhood. In this rare form of diabetes, the body's immune system attacks its own insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. As the cells are destroyed, the body loses the ability to produce insulin.

Individuals with type 1 diabetes depend on insulin therapy to survive. Patients can receive insulin by injection or through a pump, a computerized device about the size of a pager that delivers insulin through a thin tube inserted through the skin.

## Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is far more common, accounting for 90 to 95 percent of all cases of diabetes. In this form of diabetes, the body produces insulin, but that insulin may be insufficient to maintain normal blood sugar levels.

Type 2 diabetes can strike people of any age, gender, or ethnicity, but certain factors increase your risk:

**Obesity** - Being overweight or obese is the number one risk factor for type 2 diabetes. Nine out of 10 newly diagnosed patients are overweight.

**Family History** - Diabetes runs in the family. If your parents or siblings have type 2 diabetes, you are more likely to develop the condition yourself.

**Ethnicity** - African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders face a higher than average risk of developing diabetes.

Unlike people with type 1 diabetes, many people with type 2 diabetes are able to manage their condition without insulin, by making healthy lifestyle choices while closely monitoring their blood sugar levels.

## Type 2 Diabetes in Children

Prior to the 1990's, type 2 diabetes rarely occurred in children. In fact, it was once known as "adult-onset diabetes." Unfortunately, the growing problem of childhood obesity means children are far more likely to develop type 2 diabetes today than in the past.

Overweight children who aren't diagnosed with diabetes as kids still have a higher chance of developing the condition later in life. Because of the rise in childhood obesity, it is estimated that individuals born in the year 2000 have a 40 to 50 percent chance of developing type 2 diabetes in their lifetimes.

# DIAGNOSIS & MANAGEMENT

Because diabetes causes few if any symptoms in its early stages, many people first learn about their condition during a routine physical. A simple blood glucose test, usually done after a short period of fasting, is used to detect diabetes:

A fasting blood glucose level below 100 is normal.

A fasting blood glucose level above 125 indicates you have diabetes.

A reading between 100 and 125 indicates pre-diabetes, a precursor to full-blown diabetes. Individuals with pre-diabetes – about 41 million people in the United States – can sometimes prevent the progression to diabetes through healthy lifestyle choices.

Early diagnosis and treatment of diabetes is crucial. If blood glucose levels are not carefully controlled, the disease may lead to serious complications:

- Heart and blood vessel disease
- Kidney failure
- Blindness
- Neuropathy and amputations

## Managing Type 2 Diabetes

The good news is most patients can avoid these complications by controlling blood sugar levels through healthy eating, exercise, and, when necessary, insulin or other medications:

*Healthy diet* - Experts encourage people with diabetes to eat nutritious foods such as: Vegetables and fruits, whole grains, beans, lean meats, poultry, and fish.

*Exercise* - Regular physical activity can help keep blood glucose at an optimal level, while reducing blood pressure and cholesterol. Even moderate doses of physical activity, such as walking a little farther from your parking spot to the grocery store, can be beneficial.

*Medication* - If diet and exercise do not adequately control blood sugar levels, your doctor may prescribe insulin or other medications to help stabilize the amount of glucose in the blood.

To combat the threat of heart and blood vessel disease, it is also important for people with diabetes to control their blood pressure and cholesterol. Fortunately, these can often be lowered through the same healthy lifestyle choices aimed at managing blood sugar levels.

## Monitoring Blood Sugar

People with diabetes must keep track of their blood glucose levels and know their target numbers, so they can adjust their management routines appropriately. By using a tiny drop of blood and a meter, patients can see how food, physical activity and medicine affect blood glucose levels every day or by the hour. Most patients self-administer this test at home or work throughout the day.

Another test known as hemoglobin A1C is recommended at least twice a year. In addition to measuring long-term control of blood sugar levels, the A1C test is the most reliable predictor of an individual's risk of developing diabetes-related complications.

## Taking Control

Because diabetes is a lifelong condition, it is essential to educate yourself about diabetes management and commit to a daily regimen that keeps your blood sugar under control. By learning about healthy eating, exercise and appropriate medications, you will have the tools to take control of your health and prevent disabling complications.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Q** What is diabetes?

**A** Diabetes is a metabolic disorder in which the body is unable to make or properly use insulin. Without proper management, diabetes can cause chronically high blood sugar levels, leading to serious complications.

## **Q** What is insulin?

**A** Insulin is a hormone the body needs to convert sugar into energy. People who don't make enough insulin on their own can take supplemental insulin via injection or a computerized pump.

## **Q** What is the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes?

**A** Type 1 diabetes, which is rare, typically develops during childhood. People with this form of diabetes cannot produce insulin and depend on insulin injections or a pump to survive. Type 2 diabetes accounts for more than 9 out of 10 cases of diabetes. It can develop at any age and can often be controlled through healthy eating and exercise.

## **Q** Who is at risk for type 2 diabetes?

**A** Anyone can develop type 2 diabetes, but people who are overweight or have a family history of the condition are most at risk. African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders also face a higher than average risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

## **Q** Can children develop type 2 diabetes?

**A** Yes. While type 2 diabetes was once nearly unheard of in children, a rise in childhood obesity is making diagnosis at a young age more common.

## **Q** How is diabetes diagnosed?

**A** Diabetes causes few if any symptoms in its early stages, but it can be detected with a simple blood glucose test.

## **Q** What is pre-diabetes?

**A** Pre-diabetes is a precursor to diabetes. Individuals with pre-diabetes can sometimes prevent the progression to diabetes through healthy lifestyle choices.

## **Q** What are the complications of diabetes?

**A** If blood sugar levels are not carefully monitored and controlled, diabetes can lead to heart disease, kidney failure, vision impairment or a loss of sensation in the feet that may eventually result in amputation.

## **Q** How is blood sugar monitored?

**A** Using a tiny drop of blood and a meter, most patients can monitor their own blood sugar levels throughout the day.

# DATA, RESOURCES, HOTLINES, PUBLICATIONS and MEDIA CONTACTS

## **American Diabetes Association**

1701 North Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311  
800-DIABETES (800-342-2383)  
www.diabetes.org

## **Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International**

120 Wall Street, 19th floor  
New York, NY 10005-4001  
800-533-2873  
www.jdf.org

## **American Association of Diabetes Educators**

100 West Monroe, Suite 400  
Chicago, IL 60603  
800-832-6874  
www.diabeteseducator.org

## **American Dietetic Association**

120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000  
Chicago, IL 60606-6995  
Consumer Nutrition Hotline: 800-366-1655  
www.eatright.org

## **Diabetes Action Research and Education Foundation**

426 C Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
202-333-4520  
www.diabetesaction.org

## **Diabetes Exercise and Sports Association**

8001 Montcastle Drive  
Nashville, TN 37221  
800-898-4322  
www.diabetes-exercise.org

## **National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse**

1 Information Way  
Bethesda, MD 20892-3560  
800-860-8747  
www.diabetes.niddk.nih.gov

## **National Diabetes Education Program**

1 Diabetes Way  
Bethesda, MD 20892-3600  
800-438-5383  
www.ndep.nih.gov

For a DVD copy of a 30 minute documentary style program on "Diabetes" call 1-888-380-6500 or visit.

**[www.healthbodyhealthymind.com](http://www.healthbodyhealthymind.com)**

To watch on television, consult your local public television station for air-times in your area.

