

Type 2 Diabetes



What Is Type 2 Diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition where there is too much sugar (glucose) in your blood. Sugar can build up because your body doesn't make enough of a hormone called insulin. Diabetes can happen if you don't have enough insulin to turn the sugar into energy. It also may happen if your body doesn't respond to the insulin it does have.

Most people with diabetes make at least some insulin, but it doesn't work to keep the blood sugar under control. This is called type 2 diabetes. When type 2 diabetes is not controlled, it can cause sugar to build up. If the sugar stays high, it can slowly damage the heart, kidneys, nerves, eyes, and feet. It is very important to keep type 2 diabetes under control to prevent complications.

Complications from uncontrolled diabetes can include:

- Vision loss
- Kidney damage
- Nerve damage
- Foot ulcers
- Heart disease
- Possible amputation from infections



What Are the Warning Signs of Type 2 Diabetes?

Warning signs or symptoms of diabetes may include:

- Extreme thirst and/or hunger
- Fatigue
- Frequent need to urinate
- Unusual weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet
- Frequent infections
- Bruises that are slow to heal



How Is Type 2 Diabetes Diagnosed?

Diabetes is diagnosed by testing the level of glucose, or sugar, in your blood. Two or more tests might be used to diagnose diabetes. You may need to fast before some diabetes tests. This means you will not have any food or drink (except water) for several hours before your blood is tested. Other tests might require you to drink a special drink before your blood is tested. Talk to your doctor about how you should prepare for your diabetes test.

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How Is Type 2 Diabetes Treated?

People with diabetes need to improve sugar (glucose) control in their bodies.

- Sometimes, lifestyle changes, such as eating healthy, losing weight, or doing regular exercise, can help improve glucose control.
- If lifestyle changes don't improve glucose control, your doctor may prescribe medicines.
- There are many different types of medicines for type 2 diabetes, including insulin. Not all people with type 2 diabetes will need insulin. Talk to your doctor about what treatment plan is best for you.



Questions for My Doctor

- Will I have to use insulin?
- Do I have to check my blood sugar?
- How can I check my feet at home?
- Will I need to lose weight? If so, what is the best way to do this?
- How often should I make follow up visits?
- Are there any other tests I need?
- Do I need any shots (vaccines)?



Bottom Line

- Diabetes happens when the body doesn't have enough insulin to turn sugar (glucose) into energy. Diabetes causes sugar to build up in the blood. If the sugar stays high, it can slowly damage the heart, kidneys, nerves, eyes, and feet.
- Symptoms may include extreme thirst, feeling tired, frequent urination, or blurred vision.
- Diabetes can be diagnosed with blood tests.
- Lifestyle changes, such as healthy eating, losing weight, or exercising, can help you improve sugar (glucose) control.
- You may need to take medicines to control your diabetes.

For More Information

- **ACP:** www.acponline.org/patients_families/products/health_tips/diab_en.pdf
- **ACP:** www.acponline.org/cgi-bin/cpph.cgi?CPP3003_Living_With_Diabetes_2014.pdf
- **American Diabetes Association:** www.diabetes.org

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