



What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic (lifelong disease) describing a condition when sugar in the blood (glucose) is too high. There is glucose in the food we eat and the body makes it in the liver and muscles. Having high blood sugar over a length of time can cause damage to the heart, eyes, kidneys, feet and legs, and nerves. It is very important for diabetics and pre-diabetics to regulate their blood sugar. Insulin is a hormone that the body makes in the pancreas. Insulin helps change the food we eat into energy which keeps glucose levels down. Diabetics either do not have enough insulin or their body can't use it properly, thus blood sugar is too high.



2 Types

Type 1:

Usually occurs in kids & young adults. Insulin shots are needed daily because the pancreas is not making insulin.

Type 2: Most common in older adults and thus used to be called "Age Onset Diabetes". Now more and more kids are being diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. The pancreas makes insulin, but it is either not enough or the body needs help using insulin.



Prevalence in Kids

For school-aged kids, diabetes is one of the most common chronic diseases. Approximately 1 in 500 kids & teens has type 1 diabetes. 1 in 6 overweight teens has pre-diabetes. As the % of overweight kids & teens increases (# has doubled in the last two decades), so do the number of kids diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Approximately 7% of the total population of Americans are diabetic while nearly 1/3 are undiagnosed.



Warning Signs

- ◇ Unexplained weight loss
- ◇ Frequent urination
- ◇ Extreme thirst
- ◇ Feeling tired
- ◇ Blurry eyesight
- ◇ Thick, dark patches of skin on the neck or under the arms

Risk Factors

- ◇ Overweight
- ◇ Physically inactive
- ◇ Mom, dad, or close relative with diabetes
- ◇ Higher risk nationalities:
 - { African American, Hispanic or Latino American, American Indian, Asian American or Pacific Islander }



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What can be done to lower the risk of becoming diabetic?

1 Make healthier food choices and maintain a healthy body weight!

Enjoy a piece of fruit instead of a bag of chips or a candy bar and cut 200 calories.

Learn about portion sizes. You may be eating several "portions" and consuming double or triple the calories on the package.

Take healthy snacks with you so that you can satisfy your hunger in a healthy way right when your body needs it.

Save calories by drinking water instead of juice or pop. For a 20 oz. drink, this can cut 250 calories.

Check with your health care provider as to what a healthy weight is and for sound, professional help if needed.

Wait 15 minutes before you take "seconds" at a meal. It takes that long for your stomach to tell your brain that you are full.

Think before you eat! Ask yourself if you are hungry, or if you are bored, lonely, worried, or tired instead.

Eat more slowly. Put your fork/spoon down between bites. Take smaller fork/spoonfuls.

Don't skip a meal. This can cause you to be so hungry later in the day that you grab high fat and high sugar foods to satisfy the hunger rather than make a wise choice.

2 Play hard for 60 minutes or more almost every day!

Start with smaller bouts of 10-20 minutes of activity several times per day and slowly increase the time or number of sessions.

Check with your doctor first if physical activity/exercise is something new.

If you don't like "exercise", try other activities that get you moving like using the stairs, walking briskly in the mall as you window shop, gardening, or mowing the lawn.

Exercise helps to lower blood sugar because the body uses glucose for energy.

Create a family list of activity ideas and post it on the frig. Have a goal of doing a certain number off the list every day or week.

Reduce total screen time (TV, video games, computer) no more than an hour per day for kids.

Try something new as a family: walk to a park, play touch football, rent in-line skates or bicycles built for 2, take golf or tennis lessons, participate in a charity fun run/walk or car wash, play croquet or frisbee golf, learn hula hoop, four square, or hopscotch, jump rope, dance, play balloon volleyball in the family room, put a treadmill or exercise bike in front of the TV.



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