

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT TYPE 2 DIABETES

In the Clinic  
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## What Is Type 2 Diabetes?

Diabetes is a common condition where there is too much glucose (sugar) in your blood. Insulin is a hormone that turns sugar into energy. Most people with diabetes make some insulin, but it does not work as well to keep the blood sugar under control. This is called type 2 diabetes. High sugar levels in your blood over time may lead to:

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

## What Are the Signs and Symptoms?

- Extreme thirst and/or hunger
- Fatigue
- Frequent need to urinate
- Unusual weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet

Most people with diabetes may not have symptoms at first and will not know they have the disease.

## What Are Other Risk Factors?

- Age 45 years or older
- African American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, or Native American race or ethnicity
- Overweight or obesity
- Having a close relative with type 2 diabetes
- A history of diabetes in pregnancy

## Can I Prevent It?

A healthy diet and regular exercise may prevent type 2 diabetes. Even a small amount of weight loss and 30 minutes of exercise a day can reduce your risk for developing diabetes.

## How Is It Diagnosed?

- Your doctor will ask you about your medical history, including your current diet and exercise regimen, and do a physical examination.
- Diabetes is diagnosed by measuring the level of glucose in your blood. You may need to fast before some diabetes tests.
- Your hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> (HbA<sub>1c</sub>) level can be checked via a simple blood test that measures your average blood sugar over the past 3 months and does not require fasting.



- Your doctor will check your blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and kidney function.
- You will need an eye examination to check for any problems.

## How Is It Treated?

- People with diabetes need to improve blood glucose control in their bodies.
- Lifestyle changes, such as losing weight and exercising regularly, improve glucose control without medication.
- If lifestyle changes do not improve glucose control, you may need medicine.
- There are many different types of medicines for type 2 diabetes, including several new oral and injectable medicines. Not all people with type 2 diabetes need to take injections or check their blood sugar at home.
- Talk to your doctor about the treatment plan that is best for you and what your average blood sugar target (HbA<sub>1c</sub> level) should be.
- Make sure your blood pressure and cholesterol are controlled to help prevent complications of diabetes.
- The best treatment plan for you is one that you can afford and will stick with. Talk about the cost and convenience of treatment plans with your doctor.

## Questions for My Doctor

- Do I need to change my diet and start exercising?
- What is an optimal blood sugar target (HbA<sub>1c</sub> level) for me?
- Do I have to check my blood sugar? When and how often?
- What are the symptoms of low blood sugar? What should I do when I have those symptoms?
- How should I care for my feet?
- How often should I have follow-up visits?
- Do I need to see other medical specialists?

## For More Information



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American Diabetes Association  
[www.diabetes.org/diabetes/type-2](http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes/type-2)