

Diabetes

Patient education

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease where the body does not produce any insulin or is unable to use insulin effectively. When you have diabetes, sugars cannot get into your cells, and a buildup of sugar in the blood is called hyperglycemia.

The three types of diabetes

Type 1 diabetes

- Your pancreas does not produce any insulin

Type 2 diabetes

Related to one or both of the following:

- Your pancreas does not produce enough insulin
- Your body cannot properly use the insulin produced by your body

Gestational diabetes

- Your pancreas does not produce enough insulin temporarily during pregnancy related to growing baby and hormone level changes

What increases the risks?

Type 1 diabetes

- Your body's immune system attacks the pancreas and destroys the cells that make insulin, known as an autoimmune disease in genetically predisposed individuals

Type 2 diabetes

- Family history with type 2 diabetes
- History of prediabetes
- Other associated diseases and medications (talk with your family doctor)
- High risk population:
 - Women who had gestational diabetes
 - African, Arab, Asian, Hispanic, Indigenous, or South Asian descent
 - Low socioeconomic status

How do I know that I have diabetes?

- Feeling more thirsty
- Having to urinate frequently
- Changes in weight
- Feeling tired and weak
- Changes in vision
- Having cuts or bruises that take a long time to heal
- Numbness/tingling in your hands and feet

How is diabetes treated?

Connect with a Healthcare Team (family doctor, endocrinologist, diabetes educator, nurse, dietitian, pharmacist, social worker, or eye and foot care specialist).

Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes

- Your doctor will set treatment goals for you. Your blood sugar should be at these levels:
 - Before meals: -4.0-7.0mmol/L
 - After meals: 5.0-10 mmol/L

Gestational diabetes

- Your doctor will set treatment goals for you. Your blood sugar should be at these levels:
 - Before meals: Less than 5.3 mmol/L
 - One hour after a meal: Less than 7.8 mmol/L
 - Two hours after a meal: Less than 6.7 mmol/L

Working with your health care team on self-care management strategies include:

- Healthy eating,
- Physical activity goals,
- Monitoring blood sugar,
- Medications,
- Problem solving and healthy coping skills,
- Reducing risk for diabetes related complications

Where can I get more information?

Canadian Diabetes Association

Website: diabetes.ca

Reference: Diabetes. (2021, June 08). Elsevier Inc: ClinicalKey for Nursing.

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