



What's Your Type?

Tips on Identifying and Living with Diabetes

It's estimated that more than [130 million](#) adults in the United States are living with diabetes or prediabetes. Diabetes management and treatments have come a long way in recent years, so it's important to know the symptoms and possible treatments.

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease where blood glucose is too high. Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, helps your cells use glucose for energy. With diabetes, the body doesn't make enough or any insulin, keeping glucose from reaching the cells, which can cause other health problems. There are three common types of diabetes.

Type 1

The body does not make insulin. People with Type 1 need to take insulin daily, usually diagnosed in children or young adults, and experts believe the causes are genetic or environmental. Type 1 is currently not preventable, and there is no cure.

Type 2

The body does not make or use insulin well. Type 2 occurs most often in middle-aged and older people and can be caused by obesity, not being physically active, insulin resistance, or genetics. It can be prevented through diet and exercise and may be reversible according to some studies.

Gestational

While gestational diabetes develops during pregnancy and typically goes away after birth, it does make the mother more likely to develop Type 2 later in life.

People almost always develop [prediabetes](#) before developing Type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes, often part of Metabolic Syndrome, means your blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as diabetes. Prediabetes doesn't always lead to diabetes — if you begin treatment early, you can possibly prevent developing Type 2. Studies show if you have prediabetes, you can [lower your risk](#) of developing diabetes with weight loss (as little as 10 pounds for a 200-pound person) and exercise (at least 30 minutes five days a week).

The Impact of Diabetes

Diabetes care can be costly, but most insurance plans have coverage for direct treatment, as well as diabetes equipment and supplies used at home.

Because diabetes can have serious consequences if unmanaged, it's important to keep up with testing and monitoring blood glucose levels, as well as regular visits with a doctor. Common checks for diabetics include blood pressure, foot exam, weight, and dental exam.



Important numbers for all diabetics to manage are:

1. The A1C test, which measures average blood sugar level over three month
2. Blood pressure
3. Cholesterol

Checking these items regularly can help prevent heart attack, stroke, and other problems

Educate yourself and manage your diabetes with a diabetes self-management education program available from your insurance provider. These services provide education and help build skills and routines to manage diabetes. They're customized to individual needs and goals and are guided by evidence-based standards.

Topics covered might include:

- Basics of diabetes and its treatment
- Healthy diet
- Exercise
- Diabetes medication
- Blood sugar testing
- Reducing diabetes-related risks

Programs are offered in person, online, or over the phone.

What New Treatments are There for Diabetes?

Common treatments include oral drugs and, in some cases, injectable insulin. Newer drugs, improved devices to monitor blood sugar levels, and more understanding on the impact of diet and exercise on diabetes are all adding up to better quality of life for diabetics.

There are also some breakthroughs in finding a cure for diabetes. A recently approved [cell therapy](#) treatment would help certain Type 1 diabetics produce enough insulin on their own without regular medications. There are also many [clinical trials](#) for Type 1 diabetes underway.

If you have diabetes or prediabetes, take the time to educate yourself and make sure your quality of life is the best it can be.