



Take care

Understanding and preventing type 2 diabetes



What is type 2 diabetes?

It's when your body does not make enough insulin or cannot use its own as well as it should. Insulin helps sugar get into the cells of our bodies to produce energy. With diabetes, sugar builds up in the blood instead. If untreated, diabetes can cause serious conditions, such as heart disease, blindness and kidney disease.

Diabetes is common, so get tested if you have any of these symptoms:

- Frequent urination
- Increased thirst
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Cuts or bruises that are slow to heal
- Feeling hungry — even though you're eating enough
- Tingling, pain or numbness in your hands or feet

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Stop diabetes before it starts

How you can protect yourself

Type 2 diabetes doesn't happen overnight. It happens over time. And there are things that impact your risk for getting diabetes, such as your weight, eating habits and activity level.

What can I do to prevent it?

There are many ways to cut your risk of developing diabetes. You can start by:

- Maintaining a healthy weight for your height and age. To help lower risk, that typically means a waist size of 40" and below for men and 35" and below for women.
- Eating more fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains. And reducing foods made with refined flours and added sugar.
- Exercising for at least 30 minutes a day. Walk, run, dance, lift weights — it all works.
- Quitting all tobacco products or finding help to quit.
- Seeing your doctor regularly and getting any recommended screenings. And talking to your doctor to see what works for you.

What else do I need to know?

Many things affect your risk for type 2 diabetes. Some, like your weight and amount of exercise, you can change. Others, like your age or family history, you can't change. But being aware can help you take smart steps to lower your risk.

- 1 As you get older, your risk for type 2 diabetes goes up. Talk with your doctor about your cholesterol, blood pressure and blood glucose. Ask if your numbers are where they should be and, if not, work with your doctor to set target numbers that are right for you.
- 2 People of different racial and ethnic groups are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes. African Americans, Mexican Americans, American Indians, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and Asian Americans have a higher risk for this condition.
- 3 If your mother, father, sister or brother has heart disease or diabetes, your risk goes up. Share your family history with your doctor to make a plan to lower your risk.

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