

Diabetes

Diabetes occurs when the glucose (sugar) from food accumulates in the blood instead of being used for energy. In order to use glucose, the body needs insulin, a hormone secreted by the pancreas.

Type 1 diabetes occurs when the pancreas does not produce any insulin and is typically diagnosed during childhood or adolescence. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin, or when the body has trouble using the insulin produced. Type 2 diabetes mainly affects adults and the risk of developing it increases with age. About 90% of people living with diabetes have type 2 diabetes.

Prediabetes is a condition in which a person's blood glucose level is above normal, but not enough to be considered diabetes. If left untreated, prediabetes often progresses to type 2 diabetes.

What are the symptoms of high blood glucose?

- unusual thirst and/or frequent urination
- weight change (gain or loss)
- extreme fatigue or lack of energy
- blurred vision
- frequent or recurring infections
- cuts and bruises that are slow to heal
- tingling or numbness in the hands or feet

If you experience any of these symptoms or suspect for any reason that you have diabetes, see your doctor. Some individuals with type 2 diabetes may display no symptoms.

How is diabetes controlled? Diabetes management is a lifelong commitment and requires:

- **Education:** The more you know about diabetes, the easier it is for you to control it.
- **Physical activity:** Regular activity can help reduce blood sugar levels. Consult your doctor before increasing your activity level.
- **Nutrition:** A registered dietician can help you plan meals and snacks to regulate blood glucose levels.

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Senior and Healthy Aging Secretariat
PO Box 6000, Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1
Tel. 506-457-6811
seniors@gnb.ca
www.gnb.ca/seniors

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- **Weight:** Weight management is especially important in managing type 2 diabetes.
- **Medication:** Type 1 diabetes is treated with insulin. Type 2 diabetes is managed through physical activity and meal planning, but may also require medications and/or insulin.
- **Stress:** Stress can cause blood glucose levels to rise. Set aside time to relax, and get enough sleep.
- **Monitoring:** Measure and record blood glucose levels regularly to keep track of how well your diabetes is controlled.

When diabetes is poorly managed, the following complications may develop: heart disease, kidney disease, eye disease, and nerve damage.

For more information, consult:

- your doctor or a diabetes educator
- Canadian Diabetes Association (New Brunswick Division) Toll-free 1-800-884-4232

Source: Canadian Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.ca