

Learning About Type 2 Diabetes

What is type 2 diabetes?



Type 2 diabetes is a condition in which you have too much sugar (glucose) in your blood. Glucose is a type of sugar produced in your body when carbohydrates and other foods are digested. It provides energy to cells throughout the body.

Normally, blood sugar levels increase after you eat a meal. When blood sugar rises, cells in the pancreas release insulin, which causes the body to absorb sugar from the blood and lowers the blood sugar level to normal.

When you have type 2 diabetes, sugar stays in the blood rather than entering the body's cells to be used for energy. This results in high blood sugar. It happens when your body can't use insulin the right way.

Over time, high blood sugar can harm many parts of the body, such as your eyes, heart, blood vessels, nerves, and kidneys. It can also increase your risk for other health problems (complications).

What can you expect with type 2 diabetes?

You'll keep hearing about how important it is to keep your blood sugar within a target range. That's because over time, high blood sugar can lead to serious problems. It can:

- Harm your eyes, nerves, and kidneys.
- Damage your blood vessels, leading to heart disease and stroke.
- Reduce blood flow and cause nerve damage to parts of your body, especially your feet. This can cause slow healing and pain when you walk.
- Make your immune system weak and less able to fight infections.

When people hear the word "diabetes," they often think of problems like these. But daily care and treatment can help prevent or delay these problems. The goal is to keep your blood sugar in a target range. That's the best way to reduce your chance of having more problems from diabetes.

What are the symptoms?

Some people who have type 2 diabetes may not have any symptoms early on. Many people with the disease don't even know they have it at first. But with time, diabetes starts to cause symptoms. You have most symptoms of type 2 diabetes when your blood sugar is either too high or too low.

The most common symptoms of **high blood sugar** include:

- Thirst.
- Needing to urinate often.
- Weight loss.
- Blurry vision.

The symptoms of **low blood sugar** include:

- Sweating.
- Shakiness.
- Weakness.
- Hunger.
- Confusion.

You're not likely to get symptoms of low blood sugar unless you take insulin or use certain diabetes medicines that lower blood sugar.

How can you help prevent type 2 diabetes?

There are things you can do to help prevent type 2 diabetes. Stay at a healthy weight. Exercise regularly, and eat healthy foods. Even small changes can make a difference. If you have prediabetes, the medicine metformin can help prevent type 2 diabetes.

How is type 2 diabetes treated?

Treatment for type 2 diabetes will change over time to meet your needs. But the focus of your treatment will usually be to keep your blood sugar levels in your target range. This will help prevent problems such as eye, kidney, heart, blood vessel, and nerve disease.

Some people may need medicines to help their bodies make insulin or decrease insulin resistance. Some medicines slow down how quickly the body absorbs carbohydrates.

Treatment to manage type 2 diabetes includes:

- Making healthy food choices and being active.
- Losing weight, if you need to.
- Seeing your doctor regularly.
- Keeping your blood sugar in your target range.
- Taking medicines, if you need them.
- Quitting smoking, if you smoke.
- Keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol under control.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

Where can you learn more?

Scan the QR code or Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/hcnmychart>



Enter **H839** in the search box to learn more about "**Learning About Type 2 Diabetes.**"

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