

Diabetes Facts

There are three main types of diabetes. **Type 1 diabetes**, **Type 2 diabetes** and **Gestational Diabetes**. Type 1 Diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and adolescents and occurs when the pancreas is cannot make insulin. Approximately 10 per cent of people with diabetes have Type 1 Diabetes.

The remaining 90 per cent have **Type 2 Diabetes**, which occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body does not effectively use the insulin that is produced. Type 2 Diabetes usually develops in adulthood, although increasing numbers of children in high-risk populations are being diagnosed.

A third type of diabetes, **gestational diabetes**, is a temporary condition that occurs during pregnancy. It affects approximately 2 to 4 per cent of all pregnancies and involves an increased risk of developing diabetes for both mother and child. There is a higher percentage of gestational diabetes among aboriginal women.

Prediabetes refers to a condition where a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes.

Is Diabetes Serious?

If left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can result in a variety of complications, including:

- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Eye disease
- Problems with erection (impotence)
- Nerve damage

The first step in preventing or delaying the onset of these complications is recognizing the risk factors, as well as signs and symptoms of diabetes.

What are the Risk Factors for Diabetes?

If you are aged 40 or older, you are at risk for type 2 diabetes and should be tested at least every three years. If any of the following risks factors apply, you should be tested earlier and/or more often.

- Being a member of a high-risk group (Aboriginal, Hispanic, Asian, South Asian or African descent)
- Being overweight (especially if you carry most of your weight around your middle)
- A parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- Health complications that are associated with diabetes
- Given birth to a baby that weighed more than 4 kg (9 lb)
- Had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)
- Impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol or other fats in the blood
- Been diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome, acanthosis nigricans (darkened patches of skin), or schizophrenia

What are the symptoms?

- Unusual thirst
- 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
- Trouble getting or maintaining an erection
- ***It is important to recognize, however, that many people who have type 2 diabetes may display no symptoms***

Source: The Canadian Diabetes Association 2010

www.diabetes.ca

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