

What is Type 2 Diabetes?

Type 2 Diabetes means the amount of glucose, a form of sugar, in your blood is higher than normal and you are at risk for many serious health problems.

Type 2 Diabetes is the most common form of diabetes and usually occurs in adults after the age of 40. However, because of unhealthy lifestyle choices, like being inactive and making poor food choices, you can get Type 2 diabetes at any age. Being overweight increases your risk.

Type 2 Diabetes means your body has become resistant to a hormone called insulin, which means the cells of your body no longer respond easily to insulin.

Because of this you need more insulin to get the job done. At first, your body responds and produces more insulin, but overtime your body may not produce enough insulin to help.

Insulin is important because it works like a key to open your cells. With insulin's help, your body can move the glucose, or sugar, out of your bloodstream and into the cells where it can be used for energy now, or stored for later use.

But when you have Type 2 Diabetes the glucose can't enter your cells to be used. With nowhere to go, it stays in your bloodstream, traveling all around your body and causing problems along the way.

In fact, long-term damage to your body, including your heart may already be taking place. Your risk for heart attack, stroke, circulation problems, kidney disease, eye disease, nerve disease and amputation are all increasing.

Type 2 Diabetes can be scary, and confusing. It can affect many different parts of your body and leave you feeling overwhelmed.

But you can take control and help reduce your risk of developing complications by keeping your blood glucose in a healthy range and reducing insulin resistance.

Your diabetes care team is there to help you every step of the way. Members of your care team may include your doctor, nurse, registered dietitian, exercise specialist, pharmacist, podiatrist, ophthalmologist, social worker and counselor or psychologist – all of whom may be certified diabetes educators, or CDE's.

Together, you will decide on a blood glucose range that is right for you, based on your health, age, activity level and other factors. When you check your glucose at home with your meter, this is the goal you're aiming for.

You will also set an a1c goal. When you get your blood tests done at a lab, your a1c number tells your healthcare

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provider how well your glucose has been controlled over the last couple of months.

Once you know your numbers and have set your goals, you can take steps to get your glucose levels in a healthy range and keep them there.

There are many reasons why you may develop Type 2 Diabetes. Family history, age and even ethnicity play a part.

But being overweight is key. The more fat you carry, especially around your abdomen or stomach area, the more resistant your cells become to insulin.

So with the help of your diabetes care team, begin to make lifestyle changes to lose weight. Start by making healthy food choices.

Regular physical exercise will also help you lose weight.

The biggest improvement in blood glucose levels comes with a 5-7% loss of body weight so that's a good goal to start with.

And work with your healthcare provider to monitor your blood glucose level and take any medications that you are prescribed to further control your blood glucose level.

Type 2 Diabetes means you have too much glucose, a form of sugar, in your blood. If you don't make changes now the extra glucose in your bloodstream will continue to do damage to your body and you will develop serious long-term health problems.

Instead, take control now. Work with your diabetes care team to reach your blood glucose goals and improve your overall health for today and for your future.