
Understanding Type A Insulin Resistance Syndrome

Type A insulin resistance syndrome is a rare disease that causes your body to not process blood sugar well. Your insulin is not used normally by your body's cells. This condition may cause other problems. These include skin changes and cysts on the ovaries. It can also lead to high blood sugar (diabetes).

What is insulin resistance?

Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas. It helps your cells use sugar (glucose) that's in your blood for energy. Your pancreas makes insulin when your blood sugar level goes up. Insulin resistance is when cells don't respond to insulin normally.

What causes type A insulin resistance syndrome?

The condition is present at birth. But it is often not seen until the teen years. It's caused by a change (mutation) in one or more genes. This gene change causes cells to not use insulin normally. Experts aren't sure why the gene changes. You may have a parent with the condition. If so, you can inherit the gene. Or you may be the only one in your family with the gene change. Your healthcare provider may suspect this type of diabetes if you need more insulin than is usual to get your blood sugar to the normal range.

Symptoms of type A insulin resistance syndrome

Women often have more symptoms. These can include:

- Skin in body folds that turns dark, thicker, and velvety
- Extra body hair on face, chest, and back
- Acne
- Light and irregular periods
- No periods
- Cysts and more scar tissue on the ovaries
- Problems with fertility
- High levels of the hormone testosterone
- Low blood sugar after eating

Men have fewer symptoms. These can include:

- Skin in body folds that turns dark, thicker, and velvety
- Low blood sugar after eating
- Adult-onset diabetes

Diagnosing type A insulin resistance syndrome

Your healthcare provider will ask about your symptoms and give you a physical exam. You will have blood tests to check your blood sugar levels.

Treatment for type A insulin resistance syndrome

Researchers are looking for the best ways to treat this condition. Your healthcare provider will talk with you about a treatment plan. This may include a certain diet, exercise, and medicines to help lower your blood sugar levels. Ask your provider about clinical trials that you can join.

Living with type A insulin resistance syndrome

You'll need to keep regular healthcare visits to watch your health. This condition may lead to diabetes that is treated with insulin. Over time, high blood sugar can cause diseases of the blood vessels, heart, and other organs.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have:

- Symptoms that don't get better, or get worse
- New symptoms