

Understanding Type 2 Diabetes



What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition when blood glucose (also called blood sugar) levels rise higher than normal.

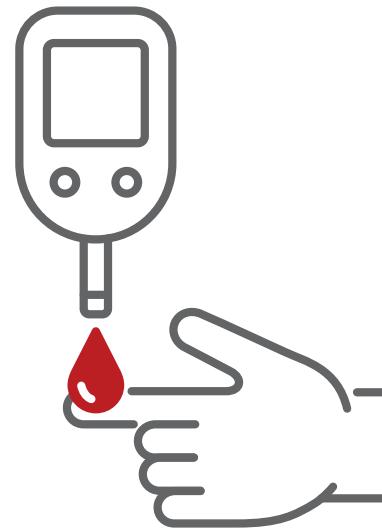
When eating, the body breaks food down into glucose and sends it into the blood. Insulin helps move the glucose from the blood into the cells. When glucose enters the cells, it is either used as fuel for energy right away or stored for later use. Blood glucose will be affected in different ways depending on the type of diabetes.

TYPE 2 DIABETES is a progressive disease, meaning its management needs will change over time.

In TYPE 2 DIABETES, the body does not use insulin properly—this is called insulin resistance.

At first, the cells in the pancreas make extra insulin to make up for it. Over time, the pancreas can't make enough insulin to keep blood glucose at normal levels.

TYPE 2 DIABETES develops most often in middle-aged and older adults but is increasing in young people.



Over time, consistently high blood glucose levels can lead to complications, such as:



Heart disease



Stroke



Kidney disease



Blindness



Nerve pain

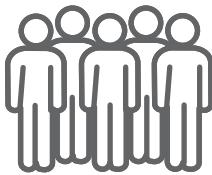
IF YOU HAVE DIABETES, THERE IS A LOT MORE YOU CAN DO TO REDUCE YOUR RISK FOR STROKE.

Talk to your doctor about your next steps. You're not in this alone. For more information please visit <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/diabetes>.

Some people are at higher risk for type 2 diabetes. Risk factors include:



Having a family with a history of diabetes



Being of African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, Asian American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander descent



Diagnosed with diabetes when pregnant, gestational diabetes



Having high blood pressure



Being overweight or having obesity



Being 40 years or older



Not being physically active

Come up with a plan with your health care professionals and check your ABCs:

A

IS FOR A1C:

Tells the average blood glucose for the past two to three months



B

IS FOR BLOOD PRESSURE:

Tells the force of blood inside the blood vessels



C

IS FOR CHOLESTEROL:

Tells the amount of fats in the blood



If these are not managed, it can increase the risk for heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.

Here are some questions you could ask your doctor to get the conversation started:



1

What can I do to lower my risk for heart disease and stroke?



2

Do any of my medications help me manage my risks for heart disease or other complications?

3

Are there programs that can help me manage my condition? Can you give me a referral?



4

How can I meet others going through my same experience?