



## Understanding Diabetes: Types, Symptoms, Risk Factors, and Management

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### Description

Diabetes is a chronic metabolic disorder that affects the body's ability to process and use glucose, a type of sugar that serves as the main source of energy for cells. It occurs when the pancreas, an organ in the abdomen, fails to produce enough insulin, a hormone that helps regulate blood sugar levels, or when the body becomes resistant to the effects of insulin. As a result, glucose accumulates in the blood, leading to elevated blood sugar levels, which can have serious health consequences if not managed properly.

### Types of diabetes

There are several types of diabetes, with the most common types being type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, and gestational diabetes.

**Type 1 diabetes:** Also known as insulin-dependent diabetes or juvenile diabetes, type 1 diabetes usually develops in childhood or adolescence. In this form of diabetes, the immune system mistakenly attacks and destroys the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, leading to a complete lack of insulin production.

**Type 2 diabetes:** Type 2 diabetes, also called non-insulin-dependent diabetes or adult-onset diabetes, is the most common form of diabetes, accounting for about 90-95% of all cases. It usually occurs in adulthood and is often associated with obesity, sedentary lifestyle, and poor dietary habits. In type 2 diabetes, the body produces insulin, but it becomes less effective in regulating blood sugar levels, leading to elevated blood sugar levels.

### Symptoms and risk factors

The symptoms of diabetes can vary depending on the type and severity of the condition. However, some common symptoms of diabetes include:

- Increased thirst and frequent urination
- Unexplained weight loss

- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing cuts and wounds
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Recurrent infections, such as yeast infections or urinary tract infections

In addition to the symptoms, there are several risk factors that can increase the likelihood of developing diabetes, including:

- Family history of diabetes
- Obesity or overweight
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Unhealthy diet high in sugar and processed foods
- Age (risk increases with age)
- High blood pressure
- Ethnicity (people of African, Hispanic, Native American, or Asian descent are at higher risk)

### Management and treatment

The management of diabetes aims to keep blood sugar levels within a target range to prevent complications and maintain overall health. The treatment plan for diabetes depends on the type, severity, and individual needs of the person with diabetes. Some common approaches to diabetes management include:

**Blood sugar monitoring:** Regular monitoring of blood sugar levels is an important part of diabetes management. This may involve self-monitoring of blood glucose levels using a glucose meter, Continuous Glucose Monitoring (CGM) devices, or periodic blood tests done at a healthcare provider's office. Monitoring helps in understanding how different factors, such as food, physical activity, medications, and stress, affect blood sugar levels and allows for adjustments in the treatment plan accordingly.

**Diabetes education:** Education about diabetes self-care is crucial for managing the condition effectively. This may involve learning about healthy eating, physical activity, blood sugar monitoring, medication management, and how to prevent and manage diabetes-related complications. Diabetes education may be provided by healthcare providers, diabetes educators, dietitians, and other members of the healthcare team.

### Conclusion

Diabetes is a chronic metabolic disorder that affects the body's ability to process and use glucose. There are different types of diabetes, including type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes, each with its own causes, symptoms, and management approaches. Lifestyle changes, medication, blood sugar monitoring, diabetes education, complication management, and supportive care are key components of diabetes management. Working closely with healthcare providers and other members of the healthcare team can help individuals with diabetes effectively manage their condition and maintain overall health.

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