



# DIABETES

## RIGHTS FOR HEALTH

### WHAT IS DIABETES?

A disorder with how your body processes sugars. It leads to serious symptoms caused by chronic high blood sugar.

There are 2 different kinds of diabetes:

1

#### TYPE 1 DIABETES

An autoimmune disease that stops you from making insulin, an enzyme that controls your blood sugar.

2

#### TYPE 2 DIABETES

In this type, your body is so used to high levels of blood sugar that the insulin you already have does not function well.



### WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Having high blood sugar can cause eye problems, heart and kidney problems, foot problems, strokes, nerve problems, etc.

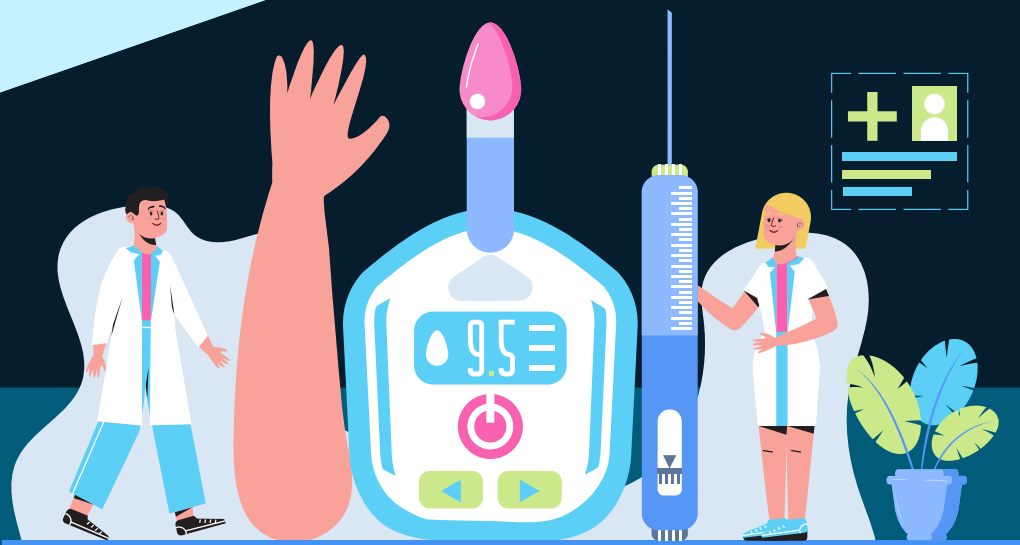
### CLASSIC SYMPTOMS?

Urinary symptoms, i.e. urinary incontinence and increased urination at night; excessive thirst; excessive hunger. You may also notice trouble with wound healing, increased infections and/or blurry vision.



### HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Healthy adults can get their blood sugar checked at their primary care physician's office with a blood sample. If your blood sugar is very high ( $>200$  mg/dL) any time, or moderately high ( $>125$  mg/dL) after fasting at two separate tests, you may be given a diabetes diagnosis. Your primary care physician may also take an "A1c" level to get a sense of how high your blood sugar has been on average over the past few months.



### WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES?

Depending on your age, the type and severity of your diabetes, based on symptoms and blood sugar level, you may be prescribed medication. Most medications either contain "insulin," an enzyme in your body that helps regulate blood sugar levels, or help you make your own insulin. In addition to medications, your doctor might suggest lifestyle changes including diet, exercise and weight loss to help manage your diabetes.

# DIABETES

RIGHTS FOR  
HEALTH



## SIDE EFFECTS OF DIABETES TREATMENT?

While different diabetes medications have different symptoms, always tell your doctor if you feel dizzy, experience abdominal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain), sweating, confusion or chest pain. These may be signs of low blood sugar and may require you to change your medication regimen.



## WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY DOCTOR EMERGENTLY?

If you have diabetes, you may be at risk for a hyperglycemic crisis. This may occur if you don't have enough insulin. It can present with nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, confusion, fatigue, trouble breathing, increased urination and thirst, signs of dehydration and/or coma.

This is a medical emergency. Please seek immediate medical care and/or call 911 for help.

## WHAT IS PREDIABETES?

If your fasting blood sugar is 100-125 mg/dL, you may be diagnosed with prediabetes. Prediabetes is less severe than diabetes but may put you at risk for developing diabetes. While patients with diabetes often require medication in their treatment, patients with prediabetes may be able to regulate their blood sugar with diet and exercise.

## WHAT PREVENTIVE CARE MEASURES SHOULD I TAKE?

Diabetes increases your risk of infection. Make sure to stay up to date with your vaccinations.

Diabetes also increases stroke risk. Make sure to maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels. If you have high blood pressure or cholesterol, ask your doctor about appropriate treatment.



## CAN I AVOID GETTING DIABETES OR STOP IT FROM GETTING WORSE?

While some patients are at higher risk of developing diabetes because of genetics and other health issues, you may be able to reduce your risk through diet and exercise. Getting to a healthy weight, quitting smoking and exercising 150 minutes a week can help prevent diabetes and reduce complications if you've been diagnosed with diabetes. It is important to meet with your doctor regularly to monitor your blood sugar and watch out for complications.

# DIABETES MYTHS DEBUNKED

RIGHTS FOR HEALTH

## 1. If I have diabetes, I must avoid carbs and sweets...

While eating well is important for managing diabetes, eating carbs (i.e. bread, potatoes and pasta) in moderation can be part of a healthy diet. The key to eating sweets and carbs with diabetes is keeping small portion sizes.

## 2. Diabetes only affects people with obesity...

While overweight and obesity are risk factors for type 2 diabetes (T2DM), you can develop T2DM at any weight. Also, obesity does not always cause diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is not linked to a certain weight.

## 3. Natural treatments can cure diabetes...

No cure has been found for diabetes at this time. Natural remedies can interact with diabetes medication and cause dangerous side effects by lowering blood sugar to unhealthy levels. Talk to your doctor about any natural treatments you may be using.