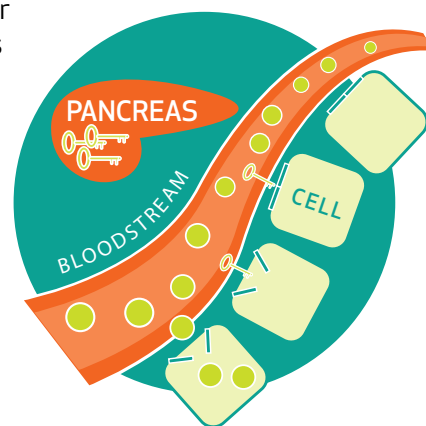


WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a serious disease. With diabetes, your body can't turn the food you eat into energy.

A few things are supposed to happen when you eat:

- ▶ Food changes to a sugar called glucose. This sugar (glucose) is your body's main fuel source. (You may hear people say blood sugar instead of blood glucose. They mean the same thing!)
- ▶ Glucose goes into the blood. It moves through the bloodstream to your body's cells. Your blood glucose level starts to go up.
- ▶ Your body sends a message to the pancreas. The pancreas sits behind your stomach and makes insulin. When your body needs it, your pancreas sends insulin into the blood.
- ▶ Insulin travels to the cells. Insulin is the key that opens the door to let glucose into a cell.
- ▶ Your cells use the glucose for energy. As glucose leaves the bloodstream and goes into the cells, your blood glucose level comes back down.



For all this to work, your body has to have insulin.

In this picture, the pancreas is making insulin. Insulin goes into the bloodstream to open the cell doors. Insulin lets the glucose in the blood move into the cells. Once the glucose is inside, the cells can make energy for your body.

The two main types of diabetes are type 1 and type 2. Diabetes develops when the body can't make enough insulin, can't use the insulin well, or both.

HOW DID I GET DIABETES?

We don't know exactly what causes diabetes. Type 2 diabetes usually happens in adults, but more and more youth are developing it. These young people often:

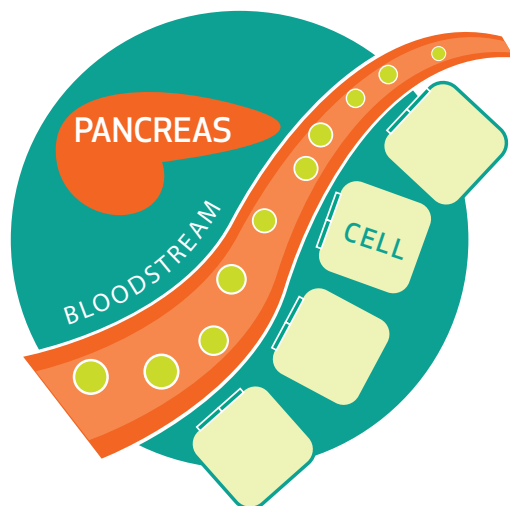
- ▶ Are not very active
- ▶ Weigh too much
- ▶ Have other family members with type 2 diabetes
- ▶ Have high blood pressure
- ▶ Are African American
- ▶ Are Hispanic American
- ▶ Are American Indian
- ▶ Are Asian American

IS IT MY FAULT?

Don't blame yourself. Think about ways to become and stay healthy. Some of these risks you **CAN** change. You can change how active you are and what type of food you eat.



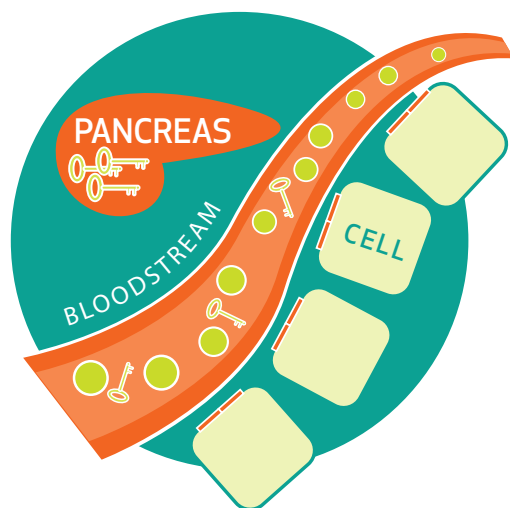
WHAT IS DIABETES?



TYPE 1 DIABETES

Sometimes the body stops making insulin. This is called type 1 diabetes. You must take insulin shots to stay alive and healthy.

In this picture, the pancreas is not making insulin. The cells have enough doors, but no insulin is in the blood to open them. Glucose cannot move from the blood into the cells. Glucose stays in the bloodstream instead of moving into the cells to make energy for your body. Blood glucose levels become high and unhealthy.



TYPE 2 DIABETES

Sometimes cells don't have enough doors or the pancreas doesn't make enough insulin. This is called type 2 diabetes.

In this picture, the pancreas is making insulin but the cell doors are not working. The glucose stays in the bloodstream because the doors don't open. The glucose can't get into the cells to make energy for your body. Blood glucose levels become high and unhealthy.

What helps insulin open the doors to let glucose in?

- ▶ Exercise and physical activity
- ▶ Eating healthy meals and snacks
- ▶ Losing weight

These things can help your body use insulin better. When you weigh more, your body needs more insulin. The pancreas has to work hard to make enough insulin. If it works too hard, it can get too tired and will need help.

Diabetes pills don't have insulin in them. They help open cell doors so your body can use the insulin it has.

Some types of diabetes pills may help the body to make more insulin.

If your body can't make enough insulin, you will need insulin shots.

What are signs that insulin is not working or the cell doors are not opening?

Dark skin patches might appear on your neck, stomach, knees, elbows, armpits, hands, breast, or groin. These dark skin patches are called Acanthosis Nigricans, or AN for short. People whose body isn't using insulin well (insulin resistant) often get AN.

WHAT IS DIABETES?

WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT MY DIABETES?

Blood glucose (sugar) levels that stay high all the time can cause problems. High blood glucose can:

- ▶ Make you feel sick, tired, sleepy, and thirsty
- ▶ Leave you without energy to play, work, or have fun
- ▶ Give you blurry vision
- ▶ Cause you to urinate (go to the bathroom) more often
- ▶ Cause you to get up at night to go to the bathroom
- ▶ Make you sick more often
- ▶ Make it hard for infections and wounds to heal
- ▶ Damage the blood vessels in your eyes, your kidneys, or your heart

Keeping your blood glucose in a healthy range can prevent these problems as you get older.

WILL TYPE 2 DIABETES GO AWAY?

There is no cure for diabetes so it will never go away. Diabetes may change over time so how you take care of it may need to change too.

HOW CAN I TAKE CARE OF MY DIABETES?

There are lots of ways to manage your blood glucose and your diabetes! Keep the level of glucose in your blood in a healthy range:

- ▶ Make healthy food choices
- ▶ Exercise and be active every day
- ▶ Take your diabetes medicines
- ▶ Check your blood glucose



Manage Diabetes with STAR

Managing diabetes means making choices—some easy, some hard. When faced with a decision, think STAR: **STOP** before you make a decision.

THINK about your choices. Consider how they will affect you.

ACT on the better choice for your health. Small steps add up to big results!

REFLECT on your progress. Give yourself credit for healthy choices.