

# DIABETES GLOSSARY

**A1C:** A blood test that can tell you what your average blood sugar (glucose) has been over the past 3-4 months. It's the blood sugar test "with a memory."

**Acanthosis Nigricans (AN):** Dark skin around the neck or armpits. AN can be a sign of insulin resistance.

**Blood glucose (blood sugar):** The amount of glucose or sugar that is in the blood.

**Blood glucose meter:** A small machine that can measure the amount of glucose (sugar) in your blood. You have to prick your finger or forearm (follow the instructions for your meter) to get a small drop of blood that you put on a test strip.

**Blood sugar (blood glucose):** See blood glucose.

**Carbohydrates (carbs):** Another word for sugar. Carbs are the main source of energy for the body. Carbs get digested quickly and turn into blood sugar (glucose). Carbs are the foods that affect blood sugar the most. Examples of carbs are fruits, starchy vegetables like potatoes and corn, breads, pastas, rice, sugar, syrup, and honey.

**Cells:** The tiniest living unit that makes up the body. Cells are alive and need glucose for energy to survive. Beta cells in your pancreas make insulin.

**Cell membrane (or an outside layer):** Cells protect themselves with a membrane (outside layer). They can control what comes in and out. Insulin is needed for glucose to get through the cell membrane and into the cell.

**Certified Diabetes Educator (CDE):** A person who is an expert in diabetes and can help teach you how to manage your diabetes.

**Control solution:** Your meter comes with a control solution of sugar (glucose). Sometimes you might not be sure if your meter or test strips are working correctly. Use the control solution to test your meter and test strips.

**Diabetes mellitus:** A disease in which the body does not make or use insulin properly. Without insulin, the body cannot use the food you eat as energy. Instead, food, in the form of sugar (glucose) stays in the blood. This leads to high blood sugar (glucose). See also type 2 diabetes.

**Diabetes care team:** Anyone working with you to help manage your diabetes. This could be your doctor, nurse, diabetes educator, dietitian, mom, or dad. Remember, you are part of the team too!

**Dietitian:** A person who has knowledge about food and how it affects your blood sugar (glucose).

**Endocrine system:** The system of your body that deals with hormones and metabolism.

**Endocrinologist:** A doctor who specializes in diabetes care.

**Fiber:** The part of food that takes longer to digest. High-fiber foods raise your blood sugar (glucose) more slowly because they are harder to digest. These foods include whole wheat bread, prunes and other fruits and vegetables.

**Glucose:** The food you eat gets digested and broken down into sugar (glucose) your body's cells can use. See blood glucose, blood sugar.

**Heart disease:** Diabetes can increase your blood pressure and cholesterol levels. This can lead to heart attack and stroke.

**Hormone:** A chemical made by your body. Insulin is a hormone.

**Hypoglycemia:** Blood sugar (glucose) gets too low. You have more insulin in your system than your body needs.

**Hyperglycemia:** Blood sugar (glucose) gets too high. You don't have enough insulin in your system.

**Insulin:** A hormone made by the beta cells in your pancreas. Insulin acts like a key so sugar (glucose) can get into your cells. Without insulin to unlock the door to your cells, sugar from the food you eat can't get into your cells. The cells starve.

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**Insulin resistance:** Your body is not able to use the insulin your body makes. This occurs most often in people with type 2 diabetes. People with type 1 diabetes can have insulin resistance too.

**Kidneys:** Kidneys clean your blood. You have two kidneys. They filter out waste from your blood. You later remove that waste from your body as urine.

**Nephropathy:** Kidney damage. Over time, diabetes can cause problems with your kidneys.

**Neuropathy:** Problems with your nerves, especially in your feet. Over time, diabetes can cause nerve problems.

**Pancreas:** A small organ located right behind your stomach. Insulin is made in the pancreas.

**Physical activity:** Any activity that gets your body moving. Dancing, jogging, swimming, walking, biking, cleaning your room, and mowing the lawn are all examples of physical activity.

**Protein:** A source of energy for your body. It takes twice as long for protein to become sugar (glucose) compared to carbs. Proteins are good for building muscle. Good sources of protein are lean meats, fish, milk, nuts, and some beans.

**Retinopathy:** Eye problems. Over time, diabetes can cause damage to the eyes. This can lead to vision loss or blindness.

**Target range:** The range in which you and your diabetes care team have decided it would be best to keep your blood sugar (glucose) levels. This range can be different for each person.

**Type 1 diabetes:** The body no longer makes any insulin. People with type 1 diabetes must inject insulin every day.

**Type 2 diabetes:** The body doesn't make enough insulin, can't use the insulin that it makes, or both. Often type 2 diabetes can be treated with diet, exercise, or pills. Some people with type 2 diabetes use insulin to help manage blood glucose levels.