

Diabetes 101

As we age, our risk for diabetes increases. Most older adults who develop this disease have type 2 diabetes. If you already have diabetes, as you grow older you may need to adjust your diabetes care plan.

What Is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a group of diseases. Type 2 is the most common. Other common forms include type 1 diabetes and gestational diabetes.

When you eat, your food is broken down into a sugar called glucose, which gives you energy. To use glucose as energy, your body needs insulin. In diabetes, the body does not make enough insulin or use it well.

The exact causes of diabetes are still not clear. However, we do know that genetics and environmental or lifestyle factors can play an important role in the development of type 2 diabetes and its complications.

Warning Signs & Symptoms

- Unusual thirst
- Frequent urination
- Blurred vision
- Feeling tired for no apparent reason
- Extreme hunger
- Irritability
- Tingling/numbness in the hands or feet



Living With Diabetes

Diabetes is a common disease, yet each of us needs unique care. Blood glucose monitoring is the main tool for checking your diabetes control.

Ask Your Doctor about the ABCs of Diabetes

Hemoglobin A1C tells you your average blood glucose level for the past 2 to 3 months. It can also be reported as Estimated Average Glucose, or eAG.

Blood Pressure control is very important for decreasing the strain on the heart, blood vessels and kidneys.

Cholesterol – lowering cholesterol and fat can help reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

Choose a Legacy of Health

Learn as much as you can about the latest medical therapies and approaches. Learn how to make healthy lifestyle choices:

- Choose what, how much and when to eat.
- Get moving and stay active.
- Check your blood glucose at home, as needed.
- Take your medicines, as needed.
- Carry a list of your medicines in your wallet and share it with your healthcare provider at each visit.
- Quit smoking.



Facts & Figures

- Seniors have more diabetes than any other age group – 25 percent of those over age 60 have diabetes.
- Prediabetes occurs when a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.
- Type 2 diabetes occurs because the body cannot properly use the insulin it makes.
- Being overweight or obese is a leading risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes and makes treating diabetes more difficult.
- Older adults with diabetes often have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, erectile dysfunction and infections that heal slowly.
- You can help prevent and manage diabetes by losing weight and becoming more active.
- Older adults with diabetes are at risk for heart attacks, stroke and kidney failure.
- Seniors with diabetes are also more likely to have memory problems, depression and difficulty with diabetes self-care.