



Diabetes Basics

Did You Know?

Some symptoms of uncontrolled diabetes include extreme thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, and unexplained weight loss. If you think you may have diabetes, see your doctor immediately to protect yourself from additional complications.

Diabetes mellitus is a group of diseases characterized by high blood glucose (too much sugar in the blood).

High blood glucose results from one or both of two main reasons:

- 1) Improper insulin production by the pancreas
- 2) Improper insulin action on the body's cells (insulin resistance)

Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas and can be thought of as a "key" that "unlocks" a door for glucose to leave the blood and enter the cells for use. If people do not produce proper insulin, there is nothing to "unlock" the cell door to let glucose into the cell, resulting in high blood glucose. Also, if the body's cells do not respond to the insulin "key" or the "key" is broken, it cannot open the cells to let the glucose in, again resulting in high blood glucose levels.

Carbohydrate foods have the greatest effect on blood sugar. High carbohydrate foods include fruits, some vegetables, grains, dairy, and beans. For this reason, it is important to control and monitor your carbohydrate intake if you live with diabetes.

When blood glucose levels are not controlled and remain too high for long periods of time, this can increase your risk for cardiovascular disease, damage to the kidneys, blindness and numbness in the hands and feet.

There are four types of diabetes:

- Pre-diabetes
- Type 1 diabetes
- Type 2 diabetes
- Gestational diabetes

Treatment options for diabetes vary depending on the type and severity of diabetes a person has. If you live with diabetes, consult your doctor and dietitian to determine the best treatment options for you.

