

Knowledge Is Power

Learn all you can about diabetes. Share your knowledge.

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease in which the body cannot use the sugar and insulin properly. Not enough sugar is used by the body cells and too much is left in the blood. Too much sugar in the blood and not enough in the body cells leads to complications.

When we eat food, our body breaks it down into glucose (sugar). Sugar is our body's main fuel. It goes to all parts of our body through our blood. Insulin, a hormone produced by an organ in our body called the pancreas, helps the sugar enter into our body cells to use for energy. Some sugar is left in the blood as a back up supply. This left behind sugar in the blood is called blood sugar and can be measured by a simple test.

We can prevent Type 2 diabetes and/or complications by being more active and eating healthy balanced meals. By being active for 30 minutes a day, we can reduce our risk by 50%!

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS What do I look for?

- * Unusual thirst
- * Extreme tiredness
- * Blurred vision
- * Frequent urination
- * Headaches
- * Cuts that won't heal
- * Weight loss or gain
- * Tingling in hands, legs and feet
- * Sometimes there are no symptoms at all



PREVENTION What can I do?

- * Blindness
- * Heart disease
- * Kidney problems
- * Amputations
- * Nerve damage
- * Trouble getting or keeping an erection

DIABETES

COMPLICATIONS What can happen to me?

RISK FACTORS How can it happen?

- * Being of Aboriginal ancestry
- * Being overweight
- * Other family members have diabetes
- * Getting little or no exercise
- * Have had gestational diabetes or gave birth to a large baby (>9lbs)

Diabetes Complications

When diabetes is not managed properly, it damages body cells and this leads to complications.

Types of Diabetes

There are 3 types of diabetes:

Type 1

Type 1 is when the pancreas makes no insulin. It often occurs in childhood and requires insulin injections for the rest of your life.

Type 2

Type 2 is the most common. It is when our insulin is not working properly, or our pancreas doesn't make enough insulin. It usually happens in adults, but we have seen an increase in children as young as 6 developing Type 2 diabetes!

Gestational Diabetes

Gestational Diabetes occurs during pregnancy and goes away after giving birth.

The Owl

The Owl is very wise! With wisdom comes education and how to use it. Learn all you can about diabetes, ask your doctor, nurse, traditional healer, pharmacist, etc. questions. Remember, no question is a silly question. This is how we learn. Knowledge is Power.



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The information in this pamphlet is for information only. The Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative suggests contacting a health care professional.

WHAT IS DIABETES?

IN THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY



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