

How Can We Tell?

What is Diabetes?

The human body needs glucose, the main source of energy for body cells. To enter cells, glucose needs the help of insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas. When a person does not produce enough insulin or the body does not respond to insulin that is present, our body cannot process glucose and it builds up in the blood stream. This condition is known as diabetes.

There are two types of diabetes:

Type 1 Diabetes	Type 2 Diabetes
Also known as insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or juvenile diabetes.	Also known as Non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or adult-onset diabetes.
Occurs in about 5% of diabetes.	Occurs in about 95% of diabetes.
Usually occurs in young adults and children.	More often affects people over the age of 40 and usually those who are overweight.
The body produces little or no insulin.	Body does not respond normally to their own or injected insulin.
Must receive daily injections of insulin.	Must control blood sugar with diet, pills or insulin injections.

Diabetes accounts for over 40% of new cases of kidney failure, with Type 1 diabetics at higher risk.

What are some of the Warning Signs of Diabetes?

See your doctor at once when you notice:

- Unusual thirst and frequent urination
- Weight change (gain or loss)
- Extreme fatigue or lack of energy
- Blurred vision
- Frequent or recurring infections
- Cuts or bruises that are slow to heal
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Trouble getting or maintaining an erection

What else should I look out for?

You are also at risk of developing diabetes if you:

- Are aged 40 years or older
- Are overweight
- Have a family history of diabetes
- Gave birth to a baby that weighed more than 4 kg (9lbs) at birth
- Had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)
- Have Impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG)
- Have high blood pressure
- Have high cholesterol or other fats in the blood

Then what should I Do?

Consult a doctor immediately.

Early diagnosis of diabetes is extremely important, to minimize possible complications such as heart disease, kidney disease, eye disease, problems with erection (impotence) and nerve damage.

People with diabetes can expect to live active, independent lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful diabetes management through:

- Weight control
- Physical activity
- Good nutrition
- Medication
- Monitoring of blood pressure
- Lifestyle management

Change your life today!

Here's a quick reference guide on some foods and nutrients which can help you maintain health:

Nutrient	Their functions	Examples of food
Proteins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build, repair and maintain body tissues. • Help fight infections and heal wounds. 	Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, tofu and milk are high in proteins.
Energy Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide fuel (calories) for daily activities. • Help maintain a healthy body weight. 	Energy is found in most foods, particularly sugars, starches, grains, fruits, vegetables, fats and oil.
Sodium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affects body fluids and blood pressure. • As a rule, eat less than 6 grams of salt per day 	• AVOID high sodium food such as processed food, e.g. "deli" meats, canned food, fast food and salty snacks.
Potassium	Helps your nerves and muscles work well (However, a very high potassium level in blood can cause the heart to stop.)	Some high potassium food include potatoes, squash, bananas, oranges, tomatoes, dried peas and beans.
Phosphorus (Phosphate)	Helps keep bones strong and healthy. (However, too much phosphorus may cause tummy ache or painful joints.)	Those with kidney failure should AVOID seeds, nuts, dried peas and processed bran cereals which contain high levels of phosphorus.
Vitamins & Mineral Supplements	A well-balanced diet will supply enough vitamins and minerals to keep you in good health.	However, kidney patients may need additional supplements such as calcium and iron.

And remember...

Physical Activity/Exercise is important in maintaining good health.

Take charge of your health!