

SUPRA HOME HEALTH, INC.

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DIABETES

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes (diabetes mellitus) is classed as a metabolism disorder. Most of what we eat is broken down into glucose. When our food is digested the glucose makes its way into our bloodstream. However, glucose cannot enter our cells without insulin being present - insulin makes it possible for our cells to take in the glucose.

A person with diabetes has a condition in which the quantity of glucose in the blood is too elevated (hyperglycemia). This is because the body either does not produce enough insulin, produces no insulin, or has cells that do not respond properly to the insulin the pancreas produces. This results in too much glucose building up in the blood. This excess blood glucose eventually passes out of the body in urine. So, even though the blood has plenty of glucose, the cells are not getting it for their essential energy and growth requirements.



WHAT CAUSES DIABETES?

Diabetes mellitus occurs when the pancreas doesn't make enough or any of the hormone insulin, or when the insulin produced doesn't work effectively. In diabetes, this causes the level of glucose in the blood to be too high.

In **Type 1 diabetes** the cells in the pancreas that make insulin are destroyed, causing a severe lack of insulin. This is thought to be the result of the body attacking and destroying its own cells in the pancreas - known as an autoimmune reaction. It's not clear why this happens, but a number of explanations and possible triggers of this reaction have been proposed. These include:

- infection with a specific virus or bacteria.
- exposure to food-borne chemical toxins.
- exposure as a very young infant to cow's milk.

However, these are only hypotheses and are by no means proven causes.

Type 2 diabetes is believed to develop when:

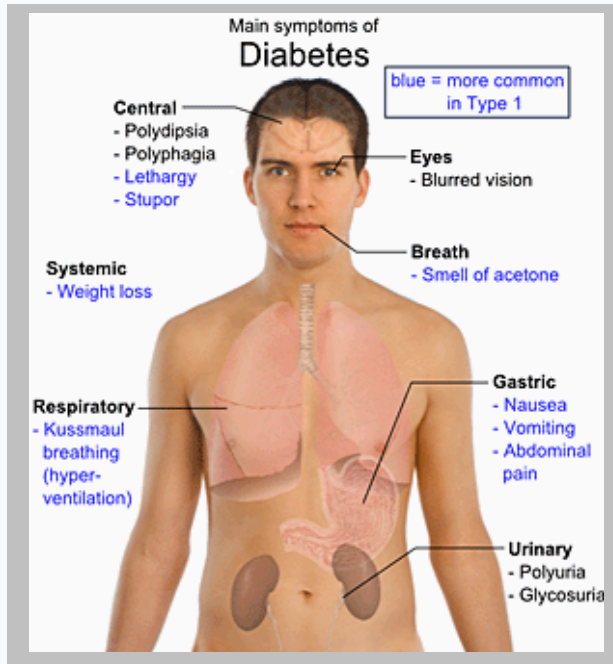
- the receptors on cells in the body that normally respond to the action of insulin fail to be stimulated by it - this is known as insulin resistance.
- there is simply insufficient insulin available.
- the insulin that is available may be abnormal and therefore doesn't work properly.
- Increasing age.
- Obesity.
- physical inactivity.

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WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS & SIGNS OF DIABETES?

- **Fatigue**
- **Unexplained weight loss**
- **Excessive thirst (polydipsia)**
- **Excessive urination (polyuria)**
- **Excessive eating (polyphagia)**
- **Poor wound healing**
- **Infections**
- **Altered mental status**
- **Blurry vision**

Symptoms of type 1 diabetes are often dramatic and come on very suddenly.

Symptoms of type 2 diabetes are often subtle and may be attributed to aging or obesity.

HOW IS DIABETES TREATED?

Self-Care at Home:

Diet: A healthy diet is key to controlling blood sugar levels and preventing diabetes complications. Eat a consistent, well-balanced diet that is high in fiber, low in saturated fat, and low in concentrated sweets. It will also help to keep blood sugar at a relatively even level and avoid excessively low or high blood sugar levels, which can be dangerous and even life-threatening.

Exercise: Regular exercise, in any form, can help reduce the risk of developing diabetes. Activity can also reduce the risk of developing complications of diabetes such as heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, blindness, and leg ulcers. Consult with your health care provider before starting any exercise program.

Alcohol use: Moderate or eliminate consumption of alcohol.

Smoking: Smoking damages blood vessels and contributes to heart disease, stroke, and poor circulation in the limbs.

Self-monitored blood glucose: Check blood sugar levels frequently, at least before meals and at bedtime, and record the results in a logbook.

Medical Treatment:

Type 1 diabetes

Treatment of diabetes almost always involves the daily injection of insulin, usually a combination of short-acting insulin and a longer acting insulin.

Type 2 diabetes

Depending on how elevated the patient's blood sugar and glycosylated hemoglobin are at the time of diagnosis, they may be given a chance to lower blood sugar level without medication. The healthcare provider will monitor the patient's progress on medication very carefully at first. It is important to get just the right dose of the right medication to get the blood sugar level in the recommended range with the fewest side effects.