



Diabetes

Type 2

Diabetes causes high blood glucose levels and serious changes in metabolism. Type 2 diabetes results from problems with the way body cells respond to insulin, the hormone that enables body cells to use glucose (a type of sugar) for energy.

Type 2 diabetes used to be called 'non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus' or 'mature-onset' diabetes. It is the most common form of diabetes. A family history of type 2 diabetes and an unhealthy lifestyle put people at an increased risk of developing the disorder. It often occurs together with high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and excess body weight, especially around the waist.

In type 2 diabetes, body cells cannot respond to insulin properly (insulin resistance), so the body cannot use glucose properly.

Diabetes Risk Test

If you can tick one or more boxes you are at risk of diabetes. Take this card to your doctor and ask for a diabetes test.

- I am over 45 and on treatment for high blood pressure.
- I am over 45 and am overweight.
- I am over 45 and have a family member with diabetes.
- I am over 45 and get little or no exercise during a usual day.
- I am over 55.
- I have heart disease or have had a heart attack or stroke.
- I had high blood sugar levels while I was pregnant.
- I have had a borderline high blood sugar test.
- I have polycystic ovary syndrome and am overweight.
- I am over 35 and have an Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Asian, Polynesian or Southern European family background.

Signs and symptoms

Symptoms develop gradually and are due to high blood glucose levels (hyperglycaemia). They include:

- Feeling tired
- Passing urine frequently
- Feeling constantly thirsty
- Blurred vision
- Infections and slow healing wounds.

Blood glucose levels may be raised for a long time before causing symptoms.

Long term effects

Over time diabetes can damage blood vessels and nerves, leading to complications including:

- Eye disease – diabetic retinopathy can cause vision impairment and blindness
- Kidney disease
- Leg ulcers and serious foot problems
- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Erectile dysfunction (male impotence).

Strict control of blood glucose levels can limit these complications.

Treatment

Treatment aims to keep blood glucose levels as close to normal as possible (4 - 8 mmol/L). It involves healthy eating and physical activity and in some cases medicines.

There are several different types of diabetes tablets that work in different ways to lower blood glucose and some people need to take more than one type of tablet to control their blood glucose level. Some people eventually need insulin injections.

It is usually recommended that people with diabetes test their blood glucose level regularly, using a home blood glucose monitor.

Hypoglycaemia

Hypoglycaemia means low blood glucose level, which may occur if doses of diabetes tablets/insulin are not balanced to food intake and physical activity. Symptoms of hypoglycaemia (a 'hypo') include:

- Shaking, weakness, dizziness
- Unusual behaviour (e.g., irritability, drowsiness, confusion)
- Hunger
- Sweating
- Numbness or tingling around lips
- Headache
- Slurred speech
- Loss of consciousness.

If hypoglycaemic, a diabetic needs to have:

- quick-acting carbohydrate (glucose) (e.g. ½ glass soft drink/ fruit juice, 3 teaspoons sugar/ honey, 6-7 jelly beans), then
- longer-acting carbohydrate within 20 minutes (e.g., a meal, fruit, yoghurt, milk).

Note: If a diabetic is unable to swallow do not give them anything by mouth. Follow first-aid procedures and phone 000 for an ambulance.

The National Diabetes Services Scheme (NDSS)

The NDSS is an Australian Government initiative administered by Diabetes Australia that provides diabetic equipment at subsidised prices to people with diabetes. Selected pharmacies are NDSS agents.

Self care

A healthy lifestyle can delay or prevent type 2 diabetes and help treat it.

- Eat regular, healthy meals, including fruit, vegetables and whole grains. Limit foods high in fat, sugar or salt.
- Exercise at a moderate level for at least 30 minutes on all or most days of the week.
- Keep to a healthy body weight.

Your **Self Care** Pharmacist

- Limit alcohol and eat when drinking.
- Don't smoke – it contributes to diabetic complications.
- Monitor blood glucose levels regularly.
- Have regular checks for blood pressure, cholesterol, eyes and kidneys.
- Take extra care of your feet and have them checked regularly by a doctor or podiatrist.
- Always take diabetes tablets with some food.
- Teach your friends, family and co-workers how to recognise and treat a 'hypo'.
- Develop a 'sick day plan' with your doctor and follow it when unwell.
- Link up with the diabetes team in your area. Diabetic teams include doctors, diabetic educators, dietitians, podiatrists and pharmacists.
- Join Diabetes Australia and the NDSS.
- Wear identification that says you have diabetes.

Related fact cards

- *Alcohol*
- *Exercise and the Heart*
- *Fat and Cholesterol*
- *High Blood Pressure*
- *Smoking series*
- *Type 1 diabetes*
- *Vision Impairment*
- *Weight and Health*

For more information

Diabetes Australia – phone 1300 136 588 or website www.diabetesaustralia.com.au

International Diabetes Institute – www.diabetes.com.au

Health/Insite – website www.healthinsite.gov.au

Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) leaflets – your pharmacist can advise on availability.

NPS Medicines Line – phone 1300 888 763 Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm EST.

The Poisons Information Centre – in case of poisoning phone 131 126 from anywhere in Australia.

Pharmacy Self Care Support – phone 1300 369 772 and ask for the Pharmacy Self Care Field Officer.

Pharmacists are medicines experts. Ask a pharmacist for advice when choosing a medicine.

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