

# Type 2 diabetes: the basics

## management

### The good news

You can live a long and healthy life by keeping your blood glucose levels (the amount of sugar in your blood) in the target range set by your doctor (see our fact sheet, ***Managing your blood glucose***).

You can do this by:

- ◆ Eating healthy meals and snacks
- ◆ Enjoying regular physical activity
- ◆ Taking diabetes medications (including insulin), if prescribed by your doctor

Type 2 diabetes is a progressive, life-long condition; over time, it may be more difficult to keep your blood glucose levels in your target range. Your healthcare team can help by working with you to adjust your food plan, activity and medications.

### What is type 2 diabetes?

Your body gets energy by making glucose from foods like bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, milk and fruit. To use this glucose, your body needs insulin. Insulin is a hormone that helps your body control the level of glucose (sugar) in your blood. Type 2 diabetes is a disease in which your pancreas does not produce enough insulin, or your body does not properly use the insulin it makes.

If you have type 2 diabetes, glucose builds up in your blood instead of being used for energy.

### Complications of diabetes

Over time, high blood glucose levels can cause complications such as blindness, heart disease, kidney problems, nerve damage and erectile dysfunction. Fortunately, good diabetes care and management can prevent or delay the onset of these complications.

### Managing your diabetes

Here are some steps you can take to manage your diabetes and help maintain your overall health and wellness – today and in the future:

- ◆ Don't smoke
- ◆ Follow a balanced meal plan
- ◆ Be physically active
- ◆ Maintain a healthy weight
- ◆ Take your medication as prescribed
- ◆ Manage your stress effectively
- ◆ Keep your blood pressure close to target level
- ◆ Check your blood glucose levels regularly and keep them within your target range
- ◆ Keep your cholesterol and other blood fats within your target range
- ◆ Take care of your feet
- ◆ In addition to regular check-ups with your doctor, also include regular visits to your dentist and eye care specialist (every one to two years)





## Get the support you need

You may have a hard time accepting that you or a family member has type 2 diabetes. It is not unusual to feel scared, shocked, overwhelmed, or even angry. A positive and realistic attitude towards your diabetes can help you manage your condition. Talk to others who have diabetes – ask your local Canadian Diabetes Association branch about joining a peer-support group or taking part in an information session.

## Your diabetes healthcare team can help

Your diabetes healthcare team can answer all your questions about how to manage your diabetes well. Depending on your needs and the resources available in your community, your team might include a doctor (your family doctor or a diabetes specialist), and diabetes educators (nurse and dietitian).

Your team may also include a:

- ◆ Pharmacist
- ◆ Social worker
- ◆ Psychologist
- ◆ Foot care specialist
- ◆ Endocrinologist
- ◆ Eye care specialist

**Remember: the most important member of your healthcare team is you.**



*Across the country, the Canadian Diabetes Association is leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthy lives while we work to find a cure. We are supported in our efforts by a community-based network of volunteers, employees, healthcare professionals, researchers and partners. By providing education and services, advocating on behalf of people with diabetes, supporting research and translating research into practical applications – we are delivering on our mission.*

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