More than **three million** Canadians have diabetes

There are three main types of diabetes. **Type 1 diabetes**, usually diagnosed in children and adolescents, occurs when the pancreas is unable to produce insulin. Insulin is a hormone that controls the amount of glucose in the blood. Approximately 10 per cent of people with diabetes have type 1 diabetes.

The remaining 90 per cent have **type 2 diabetes**, which occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body does not effectively use the insulin that is produced. Type 2 diabetes usually develops in adulthood, although increasing numbers of children in high-risk populations are being diagnosed.

A third type of diabetes, **gestational diabetes**, is a temporary condition that occurs during pregnancy. It affects approximately 2 to 4 per cent of all pregnancies (in the non-Aboriginal population) and involves an increased risk of developing diabetes for both mother and child.

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**Is diabetes serious?**

If left untreated or improperly managed, diabetes can result in a variety of complications, including:

- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Eye disease
- Problems with erection (impotence)
- Nerve damage

The first step in preventing or delaying the onset of these complications is recognizing the risk factors, as well as signs and symptoms of diabetes.

**What are the risk factors for diabetes?**

If you are aged 40 or older, you are at risk for type 2 diabetes and should be tested at least every three years. If any of the following risk factors apply, you should be tested earlier and/or more often.

**Being:**

- a member of a high-risk group (Aboriginal, Hispanic, Asian, South Asian or African descent)
- overweight (especially if you carry most of your weight around your middle)

**Having:**

- a parent, brother or sister with diabetes
- health complications that are associated with diabetes
- given birth to a baby that weighed more than 4 kg (9 lb)
- had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy)
- impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose
- high blood pressure
- high cholesterol or other fats in the blood
- been diagnosed with any of the following conditions:
  - polycystic ovary syndrome
  - acanthosis nigricans (darkened patches of skin)
  - schizophrenia

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**diabetes.ca**

1-800-BANTING (226-8464)
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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