

## Risk factors for type 2 diabetes

- Being 40 years of age or older;
- Having a close relative (parent or sibling) who has type 2 diabetes;
- Being a member of a high-risk population, such as those of African, Arab, Asian, Hispanic, Indigenous or South Asian descent, low socioeconomic status;
- Having a history of prediabetes (impaired glucose tolerance or impaired fasting glucose;)
- Having some evidence of the complications of diabetes, such as eye, nerve or kidney problems;
- Having heart disease;
- Having a history of gestational diabetes mellitus;
- Having high blood pressure;
- Having high cholesterol;
- Being overweight, especially around your abdomen.
- Having a history of giving birth to a baby that weighed over 4 kg (9 lb) at birth;
- Having obstructive sleep apnea;
- Having a history of using glucocorticoid medication

## What is type 2 diabetes?

**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.**

As a result, sugar (glucose) builds up in your blood instead of being used for energy. Your body gets sugar from foods like bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, milk and fruit. To use this sugar, your body needs insulin. Insulin is a hormone that helps your body to control the level of sugar in your blood.

## The good news

You can live a long and healthy life by keeping your blood sugar levels in the target range set by you and your health-care provider. You can do this by:

- Eating healthy meals and snacks
- Enjoying regular physical activity
- Monitoring your blood sugar using a home blood glucose meter\*
- Aiming for a healthy body weight
- Taking diabetes medications including insulin, if prescribed by your doctor
- Managing stress effectively

\*Discuss with your health-care provider how often you should measure your blood sugar level



## Get the support you need

A positive and realistic attitude towards your diabetes can help you manage it. Talk to others who have diabetes. Ask your local Diabetes Canada branch about joining a peer-support group or taking part in an information session.



## Who can help you?

Your health-care team is there to help you. Depending on your needs and the resources available in your community, your team may include a family doctor, diabetes educator (nurse and/or dietitian), endocrinologist, pharmacist, social worker, exercise physiologist, psychologist, foot-care specialist, eye-care specialist. They can answer your questions about how to manage diabetes and work with you to adjust your food plan, activity and medications.

**Remember, you are the most important member of your health-care team**

## Complications of diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a progressive, life-long disease. It may become more difficult to keep your blood sugar levels within your target range. High blood sugar 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.

## You can reduce your chances of developing these complications if you:

- Keep your blood sugar within your target range\*
- Avoid smoking
- Keep your cholesterol and other blood fats within your target range\*
- Keep your blood pressure within your target range\*
- Take care of your feet
- Have regular visits with your doctor, diabetes team, dentist and eye-care specialist

\*Discuss your target ranges with your health-care provider

**Related articles:** *Managing your blood sugar, Managing weight and diabetes, Physical activity and diabetes, Just the basics (tips for healthy eating), Cholesterol and diabetes, High blood pressure and diabetes, Smoking and diabetes, Foot care: a step toward good health, and Staying healthy with diabetes*

**DIABETES  
CANADA**

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Diabetes Canada is making the invisible epidemic of diabetes visible and urgent. Eleven million Canadians have diabetes or prediabetes. Now is the time to End Diabetes - its health impacts as well as the blame, shame and misinformation associated with it. Diabetes Canada partners with Canadians to End Diabetes through education and support services, resources for health-care professionals, advocacy to governments, schools and workplaces, and, funding research to improve treatments and find a cure.

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