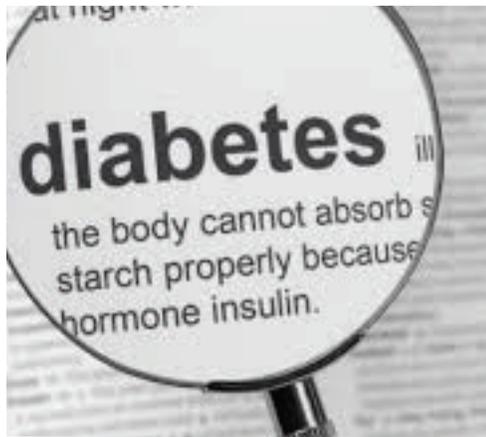


# Diabetes



## WHAT IS TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States. Unlike people with Type 1 Diabetes, people with Type 2 Diabetes produce insulin, but it is either not enough or their body is resistant to the insulin. When either of these happens, glucose can't get into the body's cells to use as energy, so levels go up in the bloodstream.



## WHO'S AT RISK?

In the U.S., over 29 million people have Type 2 Diabetes. This is over 9% of the population or roughly one in every eleven people. Of these, over 8 million are undiagnosed and unaware they have the disease. Also known as "adult-onset diabetes," Type 2 Diabetes is increasingly diagnosed in children because of the rise in childhood obesity. The diabetes and obesity epidemics, combined with longer life spans, have increased the lifetime risk of developing diabetes to about 40% for U.S. adults. The risk is the same for both men and women.

## WHY ARE THERE DISPARITIES IN TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Diabetes is more prevalent in racial and ethnic minority groups, including Hispanics, African-Americans, American Indians, and some Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. During their lifetime, half of all Hispanic men and women and non-Hispanic Black women are predicted to develop the disease.

It is not a coincidence that low income and racial and ethnic minority populations make up a disproportionate share of people living with diabetes. Low-income neighborhoods tend to have numerous fast-food restaurants and more limited options for affordable healthy foods. Neighborhoods also tend to be less walkable, with fewer opportunities for physical activity. It is this context, often combined with less access to high quality health care, that places minority and low income communities at higher risk of both diabetes and its complications.



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*Increasing exercise, even if coming from a sedentary lifestyle, can drastically lower the risk of diabetes. Improving food choices can also be effective.*

# THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR DOCTOR VISITS

Doctors are often able to detect pre-diabetes before Type 2 Diabetes actually occurs. This condition occurs when a person's blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough for a diagnosis of Type 2 Diabetes. There are four symptoms that may signal the need to be tested for diabetes: frequent urination, weight loss, lack of energy, and excessive thirst. Anyone over the age of 45, and particularly those who are overweight, should be screened for prediabetes and diabetes. Doctors will inform you of any abnormal blood glucose readings, and how often you should be tested.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO DECREASE MY RISK OF TYPE 2 DIABETES?

While genetics, or having a family history, is an unavoidable risk factor for Type 2 Diabetes, being overweight or obese is the most important risk factor. Obesity and weight gain lead to insulin resistance, which often leads to Type 2 Diabetes. Other important risk factors include age (over age 40), physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, certain socioeconomic conditions, race, and ethnicity. To decrease your risk of Type 2 Diabetes, the most effective step to take is making lifestyle changes. Increasing exercise, even in small increments, and improving food choices and decreasing portion sizes can also be effective. Both of these changes can lead to weight loss, which will reduce risk of Type 2 Diabetes.

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## Main Symptoms

- ✓ Frequent urination
- ✓ Weight loss
- ✓ Lack of energy
- ✓ Excessive thirst



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