

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a common disease in which the body is not able to process sugar well. Sugar levels in the blood increase. This leads to inflammation in the body. Over time the high sugar levels can harm the heart, kidneys, and nerves. The good news is there are many ways to prevent diabetes and improve your sugar levels once the diagnosis has been made.



WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

Many people have no symptoms when they first develop diabetes. If the blood sugar levels become very high you may become very thirsty or have to urinate more. Over time your kidney and eyes can be damaged. Your risk for heart attacks and stroke can also increase. Nerve pain in the legs can also be a sign of diabetes.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

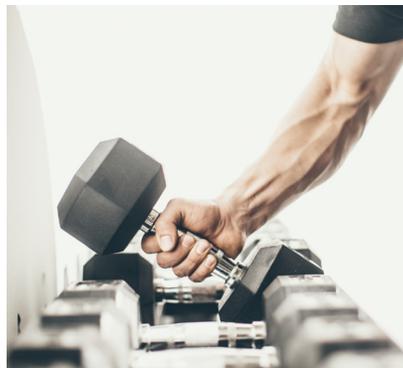
Insulin is a hormone made in the pancreas. Insulin helps the body use the sugar that we take in when we eat. In patients with diabetes this process does not work as well as it should. In Type I diabetes, the body does not make enough insulin. In Type II diabetes, the insulin doesn't work the way it is supposed to. This makes the sugar levels in the blood go up. These high sugar levels can lead to damage in the organs mentioned above.

HOW CAN I GET BETTER?

Improving your diet and increasing your activity level can help. Weight loss can lower blood sugar levels. Changes in your lifestyle can be very good for your health! Ask your health professional for more information about any of the following therapies that you think could work for you.

EXERCISE REGULARLY

Physical activity can improve the sugar levels in the blood. Exercising for at least 25–40 minutes, 3–4 times per week is very beneficial. Try to get to a total of 150 minutes a week.) A combination of aerobic and strengthening exercises can be helpful. Gradually increase your activity level—don't do it all at once.



EAT HEALTHY

Diet is a very important part of diabetes control. If you eat lots of foods that are high in sugar or carbohydrates your body will have a tough time keeping your blood sugar levels normal. Carbohydrates are the sugar and starches you eat. Try to limit your intake of these types of food. It is also

important to avoid sweetened beverages such as soda and juices. Try to eat more vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. It can also help to eat more fiber. Everyone with diabetes should see a nutritionist if they can.

MIND-BODY THERAPIES

Life stressors and mood disorders also can make your diabetes worse. Cognitive behavioral therapy is a type of counseling that can help. It can help you understand how your habits affect your health. This is a type of therapy that can be done with a mental health professional. It can help you make lifestyle changes and maintain healthy habits in the long term. Mindfulness is another technique that can be learned during counseling. It allows you to be more present in each moment. It can also lead to stress reduction.



SLEEP

Problems with sleep are common in patients with diabetes. Even small changes in your sleep cycle can worsen your sugar levels if you have underlying diabetes.

HERBAL MEDICINES AND SUPPLEMENTS

Some natural remedies can help with diabetes. Cinnamon, Berberine, Ginseng, and Fenugreek are some that may have benefit. However, some of these supplements can interfere with other medications you may be taking. Make sure you talk to your healthcare professional about what supplements to take.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Many different medications are used for diabetes. Some you take by mouth. Others are injected, like insulin. Often Metformin is an initial medication that is suggested.

Review all these interventions with your healthcare provider to decide the best treatment for you.

For more information, scan the QR code below, or visit nciph.org/diabetes



