

Preventing and Managing Diabetes

Why Should I Be Concerned about Diabetes?

- A person with a disability is **three times** more likely to develop diabetes than a person without a disability
- You can play a key role in preventing diabetes in the individuals you support by learning about the disease together



What Happens in Diabetes?

- Much of the food you eat contains carbohydrates, which your body breaks down into a type of sugar called glucose
- Insulin is made by the body to move glucose from the blood into muscles and other cells
- **Diabetes** occurs when the body either can't make enough insulin or can't properly use the insulin it makes
- Without enough insulin, the blood sugar level goes up and can make someone very sick



Type 1 Diabetes

- There are two types of diabetes
- In type 1 diabetes, the body can't make insulin so the blood sugar level goes up
- This is usually diagnosed in childhood and treated with insulin injections



Type 2 Diabetes

- In type 2 diabetes, the body makes insulin, but the cells that need the insulin actually resist it
- When this occurs, the blood sugar level goes up
- Type 2 diabetes is more common and diagnosed in adulthood

How Type 2 Diabetes Is Diagnosed

- People with type 2 diabetes may not know it, because the symptoms take a long time to develop
- Common symptoms are that the person:
 - Feels tired or lacks energy all the time
 - Urinates a lot
 - Is always thirsty and drinks a lot
- More severe symptoms can occur
- If the individual you support has any of these symptoms, suggest that they see a doctor
- The doctor can diagnose diabetes using a blood glucose test

Type 2 Diabetes Is Preventable

- These simple steps can help you **prevent** type 2 diabetes:
 1. Keep weight under control
 2. Eat a healthy diet
 3. Be physically active
- Even when diagnosed, these steps are still the first line of defense in **managing** type 2 diabetes

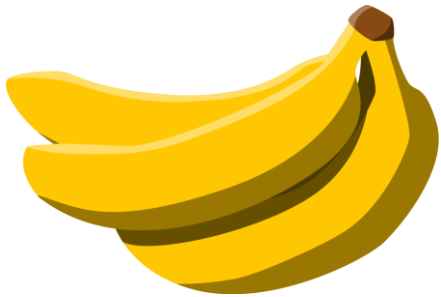


1. Keep Weight Under Control

- Figuring out the Body Mass Index (BMI) is a way to determine someone's weight-related risk
 - Check it out here:
https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm
 - BMIs of 25-29 = Overweight
 - BMIs of 30+ = Obese
- Either being overweight or obese puts a person at increased risk of type 2 diabetes
- Losing even a small amount of weight is a good place to start

2. Eat a Healthy Diet

- Plan ahead
- Don't try to change everything all at once
- Choose one thing and get started
- Find resources on "Eating Right, Staying Active" on DDS Health Toolkit



3. Be Physically Active

- Regular physical activity is key to keeping weight off and to overall good health
- A brisk walk for half an hour each day reduces risk
- Walk, bike, or garden instead of watching TV



Who Is More at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes?

- Someone who is overweight or obese, doesn't eat healthily, or isn't physically active
- Someone older than 40
- Someone with a parent, sister, or brother who has type 2 diabetes
- Someone with a past history of diabetes during pregnancy

Supporting Someone with Type 2 Diabetes

- Educate yourself – Learn about diabetes and share what you learn
- Be an active listener – If needed, help the person get support for coping with their feelings
- Encourage weight control, exercise, and healthy food choices
- Know the person's treatment plan and how you can support their plan

Other Ways to Support Someone with Type 2 Diabetes

- Learn what to do if a person has signs of their blood sugar being too high or too low
- Be aware of and look for symptoms of possible complications
- Work with family members and others who support the individual

Additional Resources

- Learning About Diabetes:
<http://www.learningaboutdiabetes.org/>
- From the Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/in-depth/diabetes-management/art-20047963>
- Managing Diabetes (from the NIH):
<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diabetes/overview/managing-diabetes/4-steps>
- From the Centers for Disease Control:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-disabilities.html>