

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is caused by elevated levels of sugar in the blood—an increase in blood glucose. This happens when insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, does not work properly or is produced in insufficient amounts. Persistently high blood glucose levels can lead to complications such as vision changes (due to damage to the retina), kidney problems, and cardiovascular issues, among others.

Why can i have diabetes?

Several factors are associated with the development of the disease, including genetic traits, an unhealthy diet, obesity, and physical inactivity. There are two main types of diabetes—type 1 and type 2.

In type 1 diabetes, there is destruction of the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. It most often occurs in children and young people. Type 2 diabetes can occur at any age but is usually diagnosed after age 40. In this case, the problem lies in both the production and the action of insulin. This form of diabetes is generally associated with excess body weight.

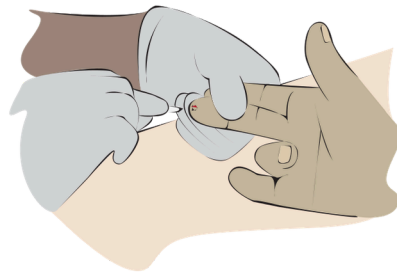
How can i prevent it?

All people over the age of 45 should have their blood glucose levels tested at least every three years. People who smoke, are obese, physically inactive, or have high cholesterol levels or high blood pressure (hyper-

tension) should have their blood glucose levels checked at least once a year, regardless of age. It is possible to prevent diabetes or delay its onset by following an appropriate diet and engaging in regular physical activity. A healthy lifestyle is the best prevention.

How can i know if i have diabetes?

Most people with diabetes have few or no symptoms. The best way to find out if you have diabetes is by having a blood test to check your blood glucose level.



The normal value is up to 99 mg/dL. When blood glucose levels are very high, some symptoms may appear, such as:

- Frequent urination
- Unintentional weight loss
- Excessive appetite
- Excessive fatigue
- Excessive thirst
- Nocturia (urinating during the night)
- Recurrent infections (urinary, skin, candidiasis)

For now, diabetes has no cure, but it can be controlled with proper and continuous treatment. To do so, it is necessary to follow three basic pillars: a balanced diet, physical activity, and blood glucose control.

Balanced diet

- Have 6 meals a day: 3 main meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and 3 snacks in between.
- Avoid consuming foods high in sugar: candies, soft drinks, sweets, and refined carbohydrates (cakes, bread, pasta).
- Prefer foods with complex carbohydrates: whole-grain bread, whole-grain pasta, brown rice.
- Use sweeteners instead of sugar.
- Choose lean meats, preferably boiled or grilled.
- Maintain a diet rich in fiber: vegetables, fruits, and legumes.

Physical activity

- Engage in regular physical activity.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week.



The WHO also recommends moderate- or higher-intensity muscle-strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups on two or more days per week for additional health benefits.

Blood glucose control

- See your doctor regularly to ensure proper management of the condition.

- Medications and insulin are important for helping restore the balance of blood glucose levels.

Feet care!

An important complication of diabetes is diabetic foot. Poorly controlled disease can lead to loss of sensation in the feet. As a result, injuries become more common. The impaired healing caused by the condition further worsens the situation. Therefore, always pay close attention to your feet. Wear comfortable shoes, check your feet daily, and if you notice any changes, seek medical advice. Keep your health under control!

