

TYPE 2 DIABETES EDUCATION

WHAT IS TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Type 2 diabetes (sometimes called type 2 "diabetes mellitus") is a disorder that disrupts the way your body uses sugar. All the cells in your body need sugar to work normally. Sugar gets into the cells with the help of a hormone called insulin. If there is not enough insulin, or if the body stops responding to insulin, sugar builds up in the blood. That is what happens to people with diabetes.

A person is considered to be diabetic if he or she has one or more of the following:

- Symptoms of diabetes and a random blood sugar of 11.1 mmol/L (200 mg/dL) or higher
- A fasting blood sugar level of 7.0 mmol/L (126 mg/dL) or higher
A blood sugar of 11.1 mmol/L (200 mg/dL) or higher two hours after an oral glucose tolerance test
- An A1C of 6.5 percent or higher

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Type 2 diabetes usually causes no symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they include the need to urinate often, intense thirst, or blurry vision.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Even though type 2 diabetes might not make you feel sick, it can cause serious problems over time, if it is not treated. The disorder can lead to heart attacks, strokes, kidney disease, vision problems (or even blindness), pain or loss of feeling in the hands and feet, and the need to have fingers, toes, or other body parts removed (amputated).

WHAT ARE THE TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES?

There are a few medicines that help control blood sugar. Some people need to take pills that help the body make more insulin or that help insulin do its job. Others need insulin shots. Sometimes, people with type 2 diabetes also need medicines to reduce the problems caused by the disease. For instance, medicines used to lower blood pressure can reduce the chances of a heart attack or stroke. Medicines are not the only tool to manage diabetes. Being active, losing weight, eating right, and not smoking can all help people with diabetes stay as healthy as possible.