

Who Gets Diabetes?



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Diabetes is most common in people who are:

- Overweight
- Not active
- Over 40 years of age
- Related to someone with diabetes
- Pregnant
- African American, Asian American, Hispanic, Native American, or Pacific Islander
- Women who delivered babies weighing more than 9 pounds or who had diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)

Diabetes is also common in people who have:

- HDL cholesterol equal to or less than 35 mg/dl
- Triglyceride level equal to or greater than 250 mg/dl
- Blood pressure that is above normal (120/80 or higher)

There are other less common causes of diabetes, such as certain diseases, damage to the pancreas, and certain medicines.

About diabetes

Diabetes is a disease where your body is not able to use the foods you eat for energy to keep your body working. Your body's cells need fuel to grow and live. This fuel comes from the foods you eat. Your body breaks down most of the foods you eat into a form of energy called **glucose**. Glucose is another word for sugar and is also called blood sugar.

Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose move from your blood stream into your body's cells. Insulin is made by your pancreas. A person cannot live without insulin.

When a person has diabetes, there are problems with how the body uses glucose and insulin. The most common problems are:

- The pancreas does not make insulin.
- The pancreas does not make enough insulin.
- The body is not able to use the insulin that it makes.

Over time, having too much glucose in your blood can cause serious problems. It can damage your eyes, kidneys, and nerves. Diabetes can also cause heart disease, stroke, and even the need to remove a limb.

Diabetes is a chronic disease. There is no cure, but it can be treated and controlled.

Signs of diabetes

- Having to go to the bathroom often to pass urine
- Feeling thirsty, even though you are drinking fluids
- Losing weight
- Blurry vision
- Healing is slow for cuts or scrapes on your skin
- Feeling tired
- Feeling hungry
- Being irritable or grumpy

Often people may not notice any signs of diabetes. About $\frac{1}{3}$ of the people with diabetes do not know they have the disease. If you think you may be at risk, talk to your doctor or nurse about having your blood sugar checked.

Types of diabetes

Type 1 diabetes:

- More common in children and young adults.
- No insulin made by the pancreas, so people with type 1 diabetes must be treated with insulin shots.
- Found in 5 to 10% of people with diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes:

- Often occurs after age 40, but more children and young people are developing this type of diabetes in recent years.
- Some insulin made by the pancreas.
- Most people have this type of diabetes.

Gestational diabetes:

- Occurs during pregnancy.
- Women are often overweight.
- Mother's glucose or blood sugar most often goes back to normal after the baby is born.
- Women are at risk to develop type 2 diabetes later in life.

Learning more about living with diabetes

Living with diabetes is not easy, but you can learn to keep your blood sugar under control to live a long, healthy life. If you have diabetes, learn how to take care of yourself. Work with your doctor, nurse, and dietitian to learn more about living well with diabetes.

Check with your doctor's office about diabetes classes offered at various Ohio State Wexner Medical Center locations. A physician referral will be needed to be scheduled for diabetes education classes.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.