

# diabetes and you

## What is Diabetes?

People with diabetes have too much glucose in their blood. Glucose is carried in the blood stream to body tissue cells that require glucose to function. Insulin allows glucose to be transferred from the blood stream to body tissue. People with diabetes have too little insulin to facilitate this transfer, and glucose levels in the blood stream build up and cause the health problems associated with diabetes.

There are two kinds of diabetes: Type 1 & Type 2.

**Type 1** diabetes is less common than Type 2 diabetes. People with Type 1 diabetes cannot produce insulin, as their immune system has destroyed the cells in the pancreas that perform this function.



People with **Type 2** diabetes are insulin resistant. Insulin can be produced, but is not used properly. This leads the pancreas to produce more insulin, but not enough can be produced to keep glucose levels in a healthy range.

## Symptoms of Diabetes



Symptoms of diabetes include lethargy, weight gain, dizziness, passing more urine, mood swings, and headaches.

Diabetes is associated with a number of health problems, including heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, tooth and gum disease, and toe, feet and leg infections.

## How Diabetes Affects Your Eating

It is crucial to maintain a healthy diet. The food you eat is used to produce glucose in your body, so eating a healthy diet will help manage your glucose levels.

To maintain a healthy diet when you have diabetes, it is recommended you:

- Eat foods that are low in saturated fat. Saturated fat is found in foods such as full cream milk and cheese products, butter, and fatty meats. It is recommended that you eat reduced fat dairy products and lean meat, avoid butter and fast foods, and limit your intake of processed meats and desserts.
- Eat meals and snacks that have carbohydrates high in fibre. These include: wholegrain breads and cereals, beans, lentils, dairy products and fruit.
- Eat regularly, and spread your carbohydrate-containing meals and snacks evenly over the day. Eating regularly will prevent your glucose levels from fluctuating.

## Recommendations for care

- Test your blood glucose levels regularly
- Follow your doctor's instructions in relation to: insulin injections and tablets (blood pressure, cholesterol etc)
- Be active wherever possible



Developed in conjunction with Kate Fleming, Dietician

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