

diabetes and you

your guide to better
living with diabetes



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Time to take charge!

If you have diabetes, you are not alone. Millions of people today have diabetes. Diabetes cannot yet be cured. But it *can* be managed. This booklet will give you some tips to help you manage your diabetes.

To learn more about how you can take an active role in your diabetes care, visit [Cornerstones4Care.com](https://www.cornerstones4care.com). You'll find all sorts of resources to help you take charge!

How can you take charge of your health?

Learn as much as you can.

When it comes to diabetes, knowledge really is power. The more you know about diabetes, the better you'll be able to manage it. This booklet will get you started. You can learn more at [Cornerstones4Care.com](https://www.cornerstones4care.com).

Work with your team.

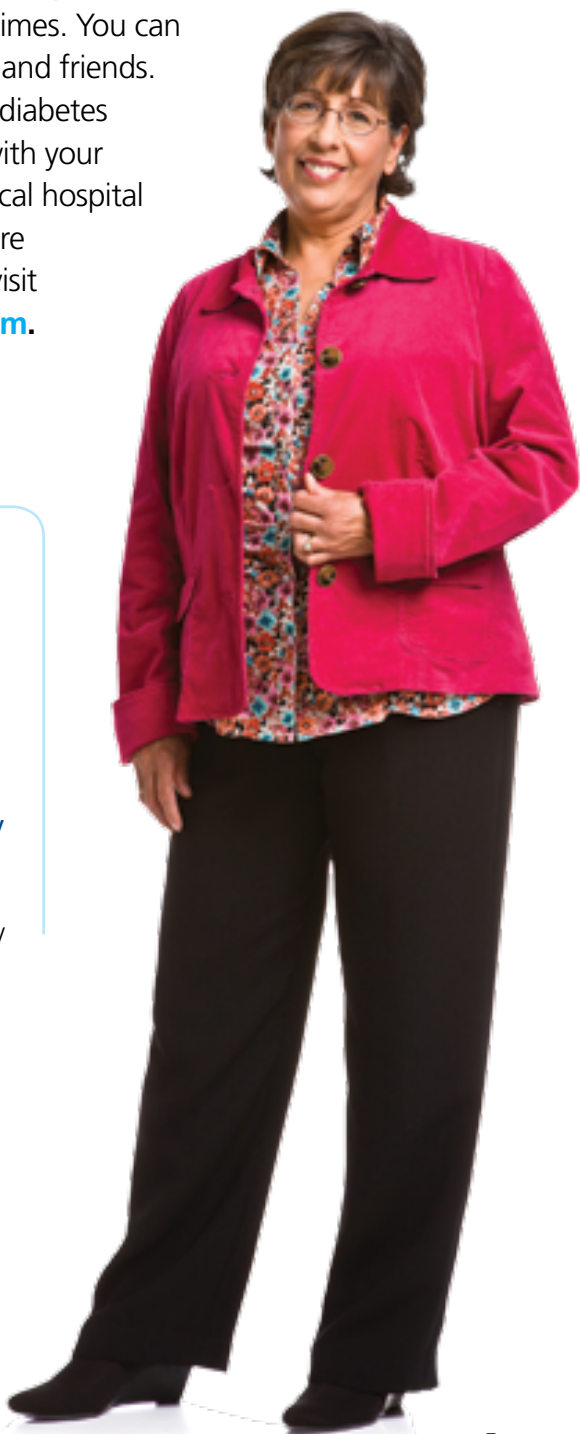
Good diabetes care takes a team. Your doctor, nurse, diabetes educator, dietitian, and others are all members of your team. And then, of course, there's you. You are the most important member of your team. Your fellow team members are experts on diabetes. But you are the expert on how you feel with diabetes. All of your team members have the same goal: to help you manage your diabetes.

Get support to stay strong!

We all need support at times. You can get support from family and friends. You can also find it at a diabetes support group. Check with your diabetes care team or local hospital to find one. To learn more about getting support, visit [Cornerstones4Care.com](https://www.cornerstones4care.com).

“It took me years to wrap my brain around the fact that I had a chronic condition that needed to be actively managed by me.”

— TJ C, New Jersey

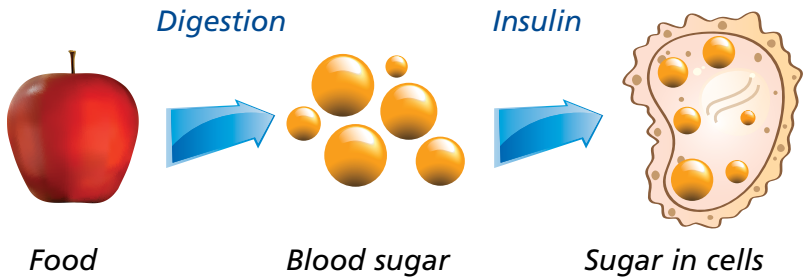


Diabetes: what it is and why it happens

Hormones, sugar, and your cells

When you eat, some of your food is broken down into sugar (also called *glucose*). Sugar travels in your blood to all your body's cells. Insulin helps sugar move from your blood into your cells. Insulin is a hormone that is made by the beta cells in your pancreas.

Your cells need sugar for energy. Sugar from food makes your blood sugar level go up. Insulin lowers your blood sugar level by helping sugar move from your blood into your cells.



When you eat, another hormone made in the gut helps the pancreas release the right amount of insulin to move sugar from the blood into the cells. This hormone is called *GLP-1*. It stimulates the beta cells in the pancreas to release insulin when the blood sugar is too high. It also helps to lower the amount of sugar made by the liver.

There is also a third hormone called *glucagon* that tells the liver to release stored sugar if your blood sugar gets too low or if you have not eaten for many hours, such as overnight.

What happens in diabetes?

When you have diabetes:

- Your pancreas makes little or no insulin, or
- Your body prevents the insulin you do make from working right

As a result, sugar can't get into your cells. So it stays in your blood. That's why your blood sugar gets too high (also called *hyperglycemia*).

There are four ways doctors can tell if you have diabetes:

1. Your A1C is 6.5% or higher
2. Your fasting blood sugar level is 126 mg/dL or higher. Fasting blood sugar levels means no food for at least 8 hours prior to checking your blood sugar
3. The result of your oral glucose tolerance test is 200 mg/dL or higher
4. You have symptoms of high or low blood sugar, and a blood test taken at a random time shows a blood sugar level of 200 mg/dL or higher

"We are not alone. We are part of a family where there are others in the same boat. So let's row together. That way, we will get there together."

— Nancy F, Kansas

Some myths about diabetes – and the facts

Not everything you hear about diabetes is true. Here are some myths you may hear – and the facts you should know.

Myth 1: “Diabetes is a one-way street to bad health problems.”

Fact: You can go in another direction! If you follow your diabetes care plan, you can often delay or prevent problems from diabetes.

Myth 2: “It’s your own fault that you have diabetes.”

Fact: Diabetes isn’t anyone’s fault. No one knows what causes diabetes. Your eating and activity choices can play a role in your blood sugar control. But it’s not the whole story.

Myth 3: “I have to take insulin. My diabetes must be really bad.”

Fact: Not true! Everyone with type 1 diabetes needs to take insulin. And many people with type 2 diabetes will in time need to take insulin. That’s because after a while the beta cells in the pancreas make less and less insulin. Since many pills work to help the pancreas release more insulin, as diabetes changes these pills simply may not work anymore.

“I have been a diabetic for the last 38 years. I started with oral medication and progressed to insulin. I have been on insulin for the last 28 years. Together with healthy foods and portion control, I can manage my blood sugar.”

– Bill B, California

You won't believe diabetes myths when you learn the facts at Cornerstones4Care.com. You can also join a **free** program to help you manage your diabetes. See the back cover of this booklet to find out how.



The types of diabetes

The most common types of diabetes are type 1 and type 2.

In **type 1 diabetes**, the body makes little or no insulin. So people with type 1 diabetes must take insulin every day. Type 1 diabetes usually occurs in children and young adults, but it can also appear in older adults.

In **type 2 diabetes**, your body prevents the insulin it does make from working right. Your body may make some insulin but not enough. Most people with diabetes – about 90% to 95% – have type 2. This kind of diabetes usually happens in people who are older or in those who are overweight. In fact, about 8 out of 10 people with type 2 diabetes are overweight.

Find out more about the types of diabetes at

Cornerstones4Care.com.

“My mother had diabetes. I found out this year that I had diabetes, too. Taking a positive outlook on diabetes helped me. I am still working on it.”

– Judy B, Ohio

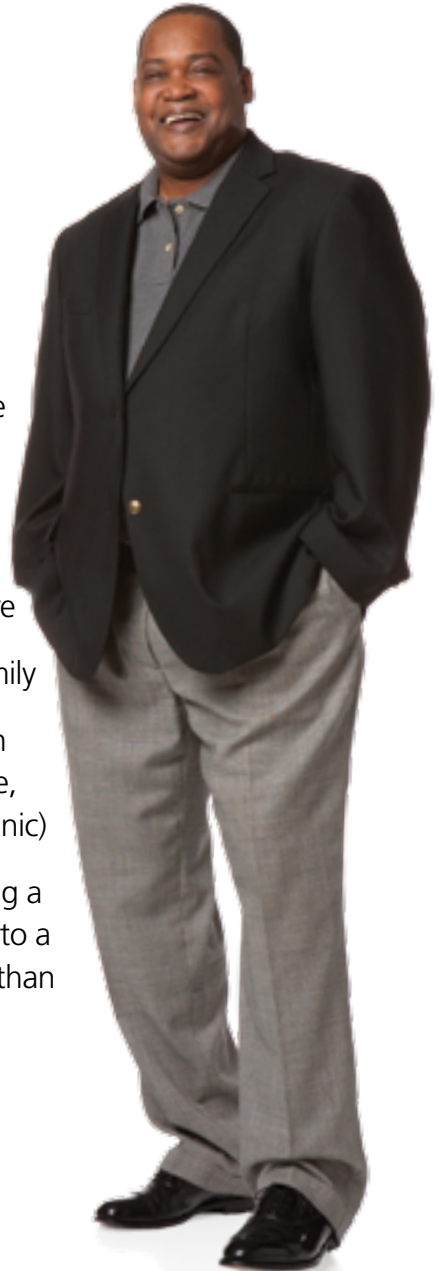
Risk factors for type 2 diabetes

No one knows exactly what causes diabetes. But scientists are working hard to find out what's behind it.

We do know that some things, called *risk factors*, increase your risk of having type 2 diabetes.

Some risk factors for type 2 diabetes include:

- Being over 45 years of age
- Being physically inactive
- Being overweight
- Having high blood pressure
- Having diabetes in the family
- Being a member of certain ethnic groups (for example, African American or Hispanic)
- Having had diabetes during a pregnancy, or giving birth to a baby who weighed more than 9 pounds



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