



1. What is type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is a disease in which the body does not correctly use the insulin it makes. Insulin is the hormone needed to change sugars, starches and other foods into energy. Diabetes can affect many parts of the body and can lead to heart disease, blindness, nerve damage, kidney damage and loss of limb (hand, foot, leg, or arm). Ninety to 95 percent of diabetic Americans have type 2 diabetes.

2. How do you get type 2 diabetes?

Anyone can get type 2 diabetes, but you are more likely to get it if you:

- Are 45 years or older
- Are overweight
- Do not exercise
- Have a history of diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)
- Have high blood pressure
- Have high cholesterol
- Have a family history of diabetes
- Have a higher than normal blood sugar level, but not high enough to be classified as type 2 diabetes

3. How do you know if you have type 2 diabetes?

The most common signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes is:

- Frequent urination
- Increased thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Unusual weight loss
- Increased tiredness
- Irritability
- Blurry vision
- Very dry skin
- Slow healing sores
- Frequent infections
- Tingling or numbness in hands or feet

Some people who have type 2 diabetes have patches of dark, velvety skin in the folds and creases of their bodies- usually in the armpits and neck. This condition, is a sign of insulin resistance.

5. How can you treat type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes can't be cured, but can be controlled by following a careful diet and exercise program, losing excess weight, and taking medications if prescribed by your doctor. For more information, talk to your health care provider.

6. How can you manage type 2 diabetes?

Careful management of your diabetes can reduce your risk of serious complications.

- Exercise 30 minutes each day
- Follow a healthy diet (high in nutrition, low in fat and calories)
- Lose excess weight
- Stop smoking
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels under control
- Keep your regular doctor appointments

7. What other types of diabetes are there?

Although type 2 diabetes is the most common, there are other types of diabetes:

- **Type 1 diabetes** (previously known as juvenile diabetes) is when the body fails to produce insulin. Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults.
- **Gestational diabetes** is when pregnant women who have never had diabetes before have high blood sugar (glucose) levels during pregnancy. Gestational Diabetes develops in two to four percent of all pregnancies and usually goes away after the pregnancy.
- **Pre-diabetes** is when a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

Sources

1. *Diabetes*. American Diabetes Association (ADA). <http://www.diabetes.org/about-diabetes.jsp>
2. *Diabetes*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/general>
3. *Type 2 Diabetes*. Mayo Clinic. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/type-2-diabetes/>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.