

# What is Diabetes?

Diabetes means that your blood sugar, or glucose (GLOO-kos), is too high. Glucose comes from the food you eat and is also made in your liver and muscles.

Your blood always has some glucose in it because your body needs glucose for energy. But too much glucose in the blood isn't good for your health.

An organ called the pancreas (PAN-kree-as) controls the amount of glucose in the blood. The pancreas makes insulin (IN-suh-lin) which helps glucose get from food into your cells. Cells take the glucose and make it into energy you need for life.

In a person with diabetes, the pancreas makes little or no insulin or the cells don't use insulin very well. So glucose builds up in the blood and can't get into your cells. Your blood glucose gets too high and diabetes can then damage your body.

## What types of diabetes do kids get?

In **type 1 diabetes**, the pancreas stops making insulin. With type 1 diabetes, you need to get insulin from a shot or a pump. Type 1 used to be called "insulin dependent" or "juvenile diabetes."

# TIPS FOR KIDS WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES

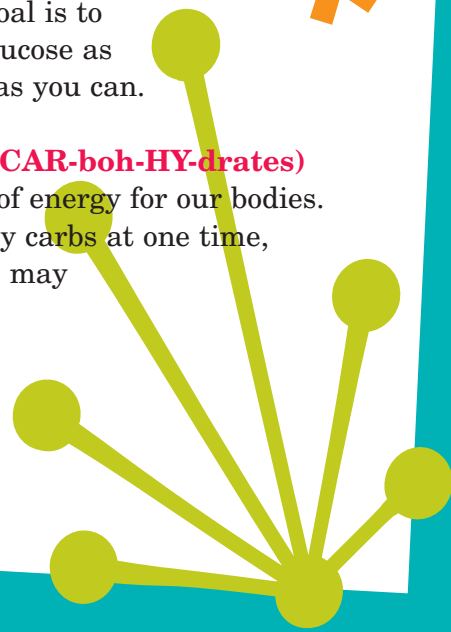
In **type 2 diabetes**, the pancreas still makes some insulin but the cells can't use it very well. Type 2 used to be called "adult onset diabetes" but now more kids are getting type 2.

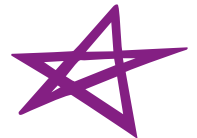
## How do you manage diabetes?

The key to taking care of diabetes is to keep your blood glucose as close to normal as possible. The best way is to **eat healthy foods, get exercise every day, stay at a healthy weight, take your medicine, and check your blood glucose** to see how you are doing. Kids with type 2 diabetes may need to take insulin or pills to help the body's supply of insulin work better.

Your doctor will tell you what blood glucose level is good for you and will teach you how to use a meter to check it. Your goal is to keep your blood glucose as close to this level as you can.

**Carbohydrates (CAR-boh-HY-drates)** are a good source of energy for our bodies. If you eat too many carbs at one time, your blood glucose may go up too high.





Many foods contain carbs. Whole grain foods, nonfat or low-fat milk, fresh fruits, and vegetables are better carb choices than white bread, whole milk, sweetened fruit drinks, soda pop, potato chips, sweets, and desserts. Learn to eat the right amount at meals and snack times to keep your blood glucose in balance.

**Eat small servings of food and be active to prevent weight gain and to keep your blood glucose in a healthy range.**

Illness and stress also can make your blood glucose go up. Things that make your blood glucose go down are insulin or pills and exercise.

## Why do you get type 2 diabetes?

Being overweight increases the risk of getting type 2 diabetes. Kids who are not active or who have a family member with diabetes are more likely to get it. Some racial and ethnic groups have a greater chance of getting diabetes—American Indians, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. You do not get diabetes from eating too much sugar.



## Why do you need to take care of your diabetes?

After several years, diabetes can lead to health problems. Blood vessels get damaged and cause heart attacks in young people. Damage to organs in your body can cause blindness, kidney failure, loss of legs or feet, and gum problems or loss of teeth.

The good news is that when you take care of your diabetes, you can avoid these problems. How? Eat healthy foods, be active every day, stay at a healthy weight, take your medicine, and check your blood glucose. Don't let diabetes stop you! You can do all the things your friends do and live a long and healthy life.



## To learn more about diabetes

**American Diabetes Association**  
1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383)  
[www.diabetes.org/wizdom](http://www.diabetes.org/wizdom)

**Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International**  
1-800-223-1138 • [www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org)



**National Diabetes Education Program**  
1-800-438-5383 • [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov)

**National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse**  
1-800-860-8747 • [www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov)

To find a diabetes educator near you:  
**American Association of Diabetes Educators**  
1-800-338-DMED (1-800-338-3633)  
[www.diabeteseducator.org](http://www.diabeteseducator.org)

To find a dietitian near you:  
**American Dietetic Association**  
1-800-366-1655 • [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

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