

Overview of Symptoms and Risk Factors of Diabetes Type 2

More common in adults, type 2 diabetes increasingly affects children as childhood obesity increases. There's no cure for type 2 diabetes, but you may be able to manage the condition by eating well, exercising and maintaining a healthy weight.

Symptoms

Signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes often develop slowly. In fact, you can have type 2 diabetes for years and not know it. Look for:

- **Increased thirst and frequent urination.** Excess sugar building up in your bloodstream
- **Increased hunger.** Without enough insulin, this triggers intense hunger.
- **Weight loss.** Calories are lost as excess glucose is released in the urine.
- **Fatigue.** If your cells are deprived of sugar, you may become tired and irritable.
- **Blurred vision.** If your blood sugar is too high, this may affect your ability to focus.
- **Slow-healing sores or frequent infections.** Type 2 diabetes affects your ability to heal.
- **Areas of darkened skin.** Some people have patches of dark, velvety skin in the folds and creases of their bodies — usually in the armpits and neck.

Risk factors

Researchers don't fully understand why some people develop type 2 diabetes and others don't. It's clear, however, that certain factors increase the risk, including:

- **Weight.** Being overweight is a primary risk factor for type 2 diabetes. The more fatty tissue you have, the more resistant your cells become to insulin. However, you don't have to be overweight to develop type 2 diabetes.
- **Fat distribution.** If your body stores fat primarily in your abdomen, your risk of type 2 diabetes is greater than if your body stores fat elsewhere, such as your hips and thighs.
- **Inactivity.** The less active you are, the greater your risk of type 2 diabetes. Physical activity helps you control your weight, uses up glucose as energy and makes your cells more sensitive to insulin.
- **Family history.** The risk increases if your parent or sibling has type 2 diabetes.
- **Race.** Although it's unclear why, people of certain races — including blacks, Hispanics, American Indians and Asian-Americans — are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than whites are.
- **Age.** The risk of type 2 diabetes increases as you get older, especially after age 45. That's probably because people tend to exercise
- **Prediabetes.** Prediabetes is a condition in which your blood sugar level is higher than normal, but not high enough to be classified as diabetes. Left untreated, prediabetes often progress
- **Gestational diabetes.** If you developed gestational diabetes when you were pregnant, your risk of developing type 2 diabetes increases. If you gave birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds (4 kilograms), you're also at risk of type 2 diabetes.

See your doctor if you notice any Type 2 Diabetes symptoms.

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