

Diabetes Information

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic (lifelong) disease marked by high levels of sugar in the blood. It is a group of diseases characterized by high blood glucose levels that result from defects in the body's ability to produce and/or use insulin.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

[Insulin](#) is a hormone produced by the pancreas to control blood sugar. Diabetes can be caused by too little insulin, resistance to insulin, or both.

To understand diabetes, it is important to first understand the normal process by which food is broken down and used by the body for energy. Several things happen when food is digested:

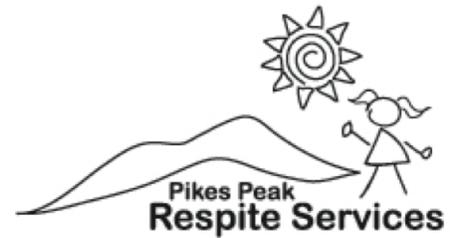
- A sugar called glucose enters the bloodstream. Glucose is a source of fuel for the body.
- An organ called the pancreas makes insulin. The role of insulin is to move glucose from the bloodstream into muscle, fat, and liver cells, where it can be used as fuel.

People with diabetes have high blood sugar. This is because:

- Their pancreas does not make enough insulin
- Their muscle, fat, and liver cells do not respond to insulin normally
- Both of the above

There are three major types of diabetes:

- Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in childhood. Many patients are diagnosed when they are younger than age 20. In this disease, the body makes little or no insulin. Daily injections of insulin are needed. The exact cause is unknown. Genetics, [viruses](#), and autoimmune problems may play a role.
- Type 2 diabetes is far more common than type 1. It makes up most of diabetes cases. It usually occurs in adulthood, but young people are increasingly being



diagnosed with this disease. The pancreas does not make enough insulin to keep [blood glucose levels](#) normal, often because the body does not respond well to insulin. Many people with type 2 diabetes do not know they have it, although it is a serious condition. Type 2 diabetes is becoming more common due to increasing [obesity](#) and failure to [exercise](#).

- Gestational diabetes is high blood glucose that develops at any time during [pregnancy](#) in a woman who does not have diabetes. Women who have gestational diabetes are at high risk of type 2 diabetes and [cardiovascular disease](#) later in life.

Diabetes affects more than 20 million Americans. Over 40 million Americans have pre-diabetes (early type 2 diabetes).

Symptoms

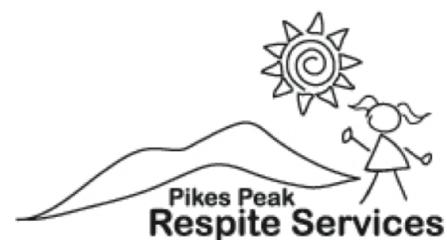
High blood levels of glucose can cause several problems, including:

- Blurry vision
- Excessive thirst
- [Fatigue](#)
- Frequent urination
- Hunger
- Weight loss

However, because [type 2 diabetes](#) develops slowly, some people with high blood sugar experience no symptoms at all

Symptoms of [type 1 diabetes](#):

- Fatigue
- Increased thirst
- Increased urination
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Weight loss in spite of increased appetite



Patients with type 1 diabetes usually develop symptoms over a short period of time. The condition is often diagnosed in an emergency setting.

Symptoms of type 2 diabetes:

- Blurred vision
- Fatigue
- Increased appetite
- Increased thirst
- Increased urination

Diabetes and meal plans?

If someone has diabetes, their Individualized Plan will include the types of food they can and can't have. Each individual will have on their medications and their original bottles of insulin need be. A [diabetes meal plan](#) is a guide that tells you how much and what kinds of food they can choose to eat at meals and snack times.

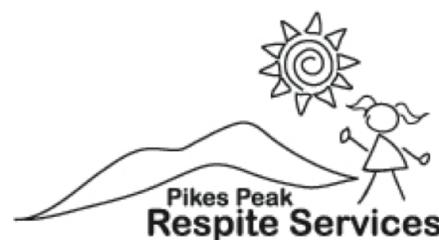
Professional Respite Care Providers that work with diabetes have to take extra care to make sure that their food is balanced with insulin and oral medications, and exercise to help manage their blood glucose levels.

What is a healthy diabetic diet?

A healthy diet is a way of eating that that reduces risk for complications such as heart disease and stroke. Healthy eating includes eating a wide variety of foods including:

- Whole grains, including oats, brown rice and whole grain cereals and breads.
- Plenty of fresh fruits & vegetables.
- Non-fat dairy products
- Lentils, dried peas and beans.
- Small to medium portions of lean meats, poultry and fish.
- Foods that are baked, broiled, poached, steamed or microwaved—but not fried.
- Very small amounts of sugar or fat.

There is no one perfect food so including a variety of different foods and watching portion sizes is key to a healthy diet. Also, make sure your choices from each food group provide the highest quality nutrients you can find. In other words, pick foods rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber over those that are processed.



People with diabetes can eat the same foods the family enjoys. Everyone benefits from healthy eating so the whole family can take part in healthy eating. It takes some planning but you can fit your favorite foods into your meal plan and still manage your blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol.

Planning meals is important for managing diabetes, but what about snacks?

When it comes to snacking, people often think of foods that are high in [sugar](#) or added [fats](#) but you have lots of other options.

Snacks can help curb hunger while adding a nutritious energy boost to your day. But that means choosing foods wisely.

It's a great opportunity to fit in another serving of [whole grains](#), [fruits](#), or [vegetables](#)! These foods are lower in fat and calories compared to most salty snacks and sweets. They will also fill you up and give you the energy you need.

Regardless of how many snacks your meal plan includes, [portion sizes](#) are the key to controlling your blood glucose and avoiding weight gain. So, resist those trips to the vending machine – plan ahead and pack a healthy snack!

Read food labels for signs of hidden sugars. Any ingredient that ends in “ose” is some kind of sugar—like fructose, glucose, and sucrose. Avoid foods with sugar or corn syrup listed as one of the first three ingredients.

Encourage daily exercise. Diabetics who exercise have better control of their blood sugar.

Remember that every food affects the blood sugar...some foods just take longer.

1. A high fat food will cause a jump in blood sugar in about 6 to 8 hours.
2. A food that is mostly protein will make the blood sugar rise in about 3 to 4 hours.
3. A starchy or sugary food (mostly carbohydrates) boosts the blood sugar in about 30 minutes.

For further information on Diabetes:

<http://www.diabetes.org/>, <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/planning-meals/snacks/>, <http://health.yahoo.net/adamcontent/diabetes>, <http://diabetes.about.com/od/symptomsdiagnosis/p/Symptoms.htm>

