

DIABETES

STAY WELL INFORMED- STAY HEALTHY

OVERVIEW AND MANAGEMENT

Diabetes Mellitus is a group of metabolic disorders, which is a disorder or disease that interferes with the body's ability to convert food into energy. It is defined as a group of diseases that result in too much sugar in the blood over a prolonged period of time. It occurs when the body cannot properly regulate blood sugar due to either a lack of insulin or the body's inability to use insulin. There are two main types of diabetes:

TYPES

Type I Diabetes (T1DM)

Cause: an autoimmune condition, meaning a condition where the body's immune system attacks and destroys healthy insulin-producing cells in the pancreas (beta cells).

Onset: typically diagnosed in childhood or early adulthood.

Management: Lifelong insulin therapy is required to manage blood sugar levels.

Type II Diabetes (T2DM)

Cause: the body either doesn't produce enough insulin or becomes resistant to the insulin it produces.

Onset: usually develops in adulthood, though it's becoming more common in children due to rising obesity rates, as obesity is one of the leading factors that may lead to the onset of diabetes.

Management: can often be managed with lifestyle changes like diet and exercise but may require oral medications or insulin as the disease progresses.

Gestational Diabetes:

Cause: occurs during pregnancy when the body cannot produce enough insulin to meet the increased demands.

Onset: typically develops around the 24th week of pregnancy.

Management: managed with diet, exercise, and sometimes insulin. It usually revolves around childbirth, but women who have had gestational diabetes are at a higher risk of developing Type II Diabetes later in life.

SYMPTOMS

- Increased thirst (polydipsia)
- Frequent urination (polyuria)
- Extreme hunger (polyphagia)
- Fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss
- Slow-healing sores or infections



COMPLICATIONS

- Cardiovascular disease (heart disease which can lead to heart attacks)
- Nerve damage (neuropathy)
- Kidney damage (neuropathy), which can lead to end stage kidney disease requiring dialysis
- Vision problems (retinopathy), which can lead to blindness
- Poor wound healing and infections, particularly of the legs and feet, leading to amputation

MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION

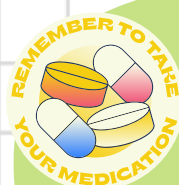
Diet: a balanced diet with a focus on managing blood sugar levels.

Exercise: regular physical activity to help control weight and improve insulin sensitivity.

Medications: insulin or oral drugs may be used to control blood glucose levels.

Monitoring: regular blood glucose monitoring is key to maintaining control.

Preventing or managing diabetes effectively often involves a combination of lifestyle changes, regular medical checkups, and in some cases, medication. It may also be a good idea to work with a nutritionist who can recommend healthy food choices and a well-balanced diet, to help keep blood sugar levels under control.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elizabeth Martinez, PA-C is a certified Physician Assistant with over 20 years of experience. Her primary focus is in Internal Medicine, where she treats patients with various chronic conditions, including Diabetes, High Blood Pressure, and High Cholesterol. She strongly believes that lifestyle choices and changes play an integral part in disease control and modification, and can ultimately lead to a long, healthy life. She resides in Essex County, NJ with her husband and two children.