



Greenville Medical Associates

Type 2 Diabetes

Overview

Diabetes means your blood glucose, or blood sugar, levels are too high. With type 2 diabetes, the more common type of diabetes, your body does not make or use insulin well. Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose get into your cells to give them energy. Without insulin, too much glucose stays in your blood.

You have a higher risk of type 2 diabetes if:

- You are older.
- You are obese.
- You have a family history of diabetes.
- You do not exercise.

The symptoms of type 2 diabetes appear slowly. Some people do not notice symptoms at all. The symptoms can include:

- Being very thirsty.
- Urinating often.
- Feeling very hungry or tired.
- Losing weight without trying.
- Having sores that heal slowly.
- Having blurry eyesight.

A blood test can show if you have diabetes. Many people can manage their diabetes through healthy eating, physical activity and blood glucose testing. Some people also need to take diabetes medicines.

Introduction

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- **Cherrydale Office:** 2601 N Pleasantburg Dr, Greenville, SC 29609, Appointments: (864) 299-1990

Diabetes is a common condition that affects millions of Americans every year.

Your health care provider may have told you that you have type 2 diabetes. Even though there is no cure for diabetes to date, there are several treatments that can control it.

This health information will help you to understand type 2 diabetes and how to control it.

Diabetes

The food we eat is turned into sugar, called glucose.

The blood stream carries the glucose to the cells.

For glucose to enter a cell, 2 conditions must be present.

1. The cell must have enough “doors,” called receptors.
2. A hormone called insulin “unlocks” the receptors.

Type 2 diabetes is when the body has enough insulin, but there are not enough receptors, or “doors,” on the cells to allow glucose to enter. This results in high levels of glucose in the blood because it cannot enter the cells.

Causes

Diabetes is NOT contagious. The exact cause of type 2 diabetes is unknown. It tends to run in families. About 90 - 95% of all people with diabetes have type 2.

Type 2 diabetes is induced by obesity and inactivity. Many people with type 2 diabetes also have high blood pressure and high levels of fat in the blood.

Unfortunately, since more and more children are obese, type 2 diabetes is becoming more common among children and young adults.

Signs & Symptoms

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The symptoms of type 2 diabetes show up gradually, over a long period of time.

Common signs and symptoms of diabetes include:

- Excessive thirst.
- Urinating often.
- Excessive hunger.
- Weight loss.
- Fatigue.
- Changes in vision.
- Slow-healing cuts or infections.
- Itchy skin.

If left untreated, glucose levels in the blood can become very high, leading to coma and possibly death.

Diabetes is usually discovered if your health care provider notices a high level of sugar in your blood or urine.

Blood sugar can be checked by doing a simple blood test. The most reliable test results are when the blood sample is taken before anything is eaten in the morning. This is called a fasting blood sugar.

Treatment Options

Diabetes cannot be cured. However, it CAN be controlled by keeping blood sugar levels within a normal range.

Treatment and management of diabetes is different for each patient. Your health care provider can explain which kind of treatment is best for you.

Patients with type 2 diabetes do not typically need insulin. They can usually control their blood sugar with diet and exercise. Sometimes oral medications are also prescribed.

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The success of your treatment depends mostly on you. When you learn and practice how to control your sugar level, you will enjoy a healthier life. It is important to keep your blood sugar within the normal blood sugar range.

Controlling Diabetes

You can control diabetes with:

- Healthy diet.
- Exercise.
- Blood sugar checks.
- Medications.

Your health care provider will tell you how to plan meals. He or she can also answer any questions you may have.

The 3 goals of a healthy diet are:

- Weight control.
- Normal blood sugar level.
- Body fat reduction.

A healthy diet includes WHAT you eat, HOW MUCH you eat, and HOW OFTEN you eat. You might be surprised by how many healthy and tasty food options you have.

Exercise lowers glucose levels, helps with weight-loss, keeps your heart healthy, and promotes healthy circulation. In addition, exercise relieves stress and strengthens muscles.

Always check with your health care provider before starting a new exercise program.

It is important to test blood sugar levels in order to make sure they are normal. If your blood sugar is too low or too high, your diabetes medication, diet, or exercise plan may need to change. Your health care provider will let you know if a change is needed.

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Your blood sugar level can be tested with a small drop of blood from one of your fingers. This drop is obtained by sticking your finger with a lancet, a small disposable needle. Blood sugar should be checked 1-4 times each day, usually before breakfast, lunch, dinner and bedtime. Most people with diabetes become very good at checking their own blood sugar.

Your health care provider will teach you how to test your blood sugar correctly. He or she will tell you what times of the day to do the tests.

Your health care provider will show you how to make changes in your medication, diet, and exercise plan to help control your blood sugar. He or she will also review your blood sugar records and make any necessary changes to your therapy.

In the event that you may need insulin, a member of the diabetes care team will teach you which insulin combination you need, how to prepare the insulin syringe and how to give yourself an injection.

You will have a schedule to follow. This schedule may need to be changed, depending on your activity level and eating patterns.

Hyperglycemia (High Blood Sugar)

When controlling diabetes, your blood sugar can become too high or too low. Fortunately, you can easily regain control of your blood sugar.

When too much sugar is in your blood, it is called hyperglycemia. Hyper is Greek and means “more.” Glycemia means “sugar in the blood.”

Hyperglycemia can be caused by eating too much food or sugary foods. Hyperglycemia can also result from not taking medication. It can also occur from being sick. If not treated, hyperglycemia could cause a coma.

Signs of high blood sugar, or hyperglycemia, include:

- Dry mouth.
- Thirst.
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- Frequent urination.
- Blurry vision.
- Fatigue or drowsiness.
- Weight loss.

When you have high blood sugar, drink water or other sugar-free liquids. Check your blood sugar and stick to your diet plan.

If your blood sugar stays too high, call your health care provider. Your health care provider will tell you what is too high for you. If your blood sugar is too high, you may need to go to the hospital.

Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)

Hypoglycemia happens when there is too little sugar in your blood. Hypo is Greek and means “less.”

Hypoglycemia usually occurs in patients who take insulin or other medications. Taking too much insulin can cause it. Hypoglycemia is also known as insulin reaction.

Hypoglycemia can happen when, after taking your medication, you decrease your food intake or skip a meal. It may also happen when you exercise more than usual.

Signs of low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia, include:

- Sweating, shaking, nervousness, or a pounding heart.
 - Hunger.
 - Dizziness or faintness.
 - Personality changes, confused thinking, impatience, or crankiness.
 - Numbness of lips and tongue.
 - Headache.
 - Blurred vision.
 - Slurred or slowed speech.
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If not treated, low blood sugar can lead to fainting, seizures or death. Low blood sugar can happen quickly and be life threatening. People with diabetes experience different signs when their blood sugar is low. You should know how you feel when your blood sugar is low.

If you have low blood sugar, immediately eat or drink something containing fast-acting sugar. Examples include: half a cup of fruit juice, ½ can of regular soda pop, 10 gumdrops, or 1 tablespoon of sugar or honey.

If your symptoms do not go away in 15 minutes or your blood sugar remains less than 80 mg/dL, take another dose of fast-acting sugar. Repeat every 10 -15 minutes until your blood sugar is higher than 80.

If it is less than 30 minutes until your next meal, eat that meal. If it is more than 30 minutes, eat a snack, such as half a meat sandwich or three crackers. Eat the meal or snack after you have taken a dose of fast-acting sugar.

Do not subtract the snack from your next meal. Do not drive or operate equipment if you think your blood sugar is low.

You should wear a Medic Alert Bracelet® and tell family members and friends that you have diabetes. If they ever find you unconscious or not making sense, they should take you to a hospital immediately or call your local medical emergency providers.

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Summary

When you control your blood sugar, you will feel better and have more energy.

You can successfully manage your diabetes with:

- Diet plan.
- Blood sugar testing.
- Exercise.
- Prescribed medication.
- Good hygiene.
- Learning about diabetes.

Your diabetic care team will explain your specific diabetes control plan. By following your plan, you will have much less risk of diabetes complications.

With a diabetes control plan, you can enjoy a healthier lifestyle while controlling diabetes!

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