

Diabetes Factsheet

Diabetes Mellitus (Diabetes) occurs when there are abnormally high levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood due to the body producing insufficient insulin or not responding to the insulin being produced.

Without insulin, glucose remains in the bloodstream at high levels, instead of reaching the cells. The body recognises the dilemma and tries to provide the cells with other forms of fuel, such as stored fats. Extensive fat burning can release by-products called ketones, which are dangerous in high amounts.

There are two main types of diabetes

- Type 1 (also known as juvenile diabetes), and
- Type 2 (also known as adult-onset diabetes)

There is no cure for diabetes but it can be effectively managed with insulin injections, good nutrition, and exercise.

Diabetes is Australia's fastest growing chronic disease.

Type 1 Diabetes

- Can occur at any age, but is more commonly diagnosed in children and young adults
- Abrupt onset
- Develops when the cells in the pancreas that produce insulin are destroyed by the body's own immune system
- Injections of insulin are the only treatment, and are necessary for survival

Type 2 Diabetes

- Known as a 'lifestyle disease' because of a higher prevalence in overweight or obese people, or people who are physically inactive
- Preventable but not curable
- Most common form of diabetes, accounting for 80-90 per cent of all cases
- Slow onset
- Usually develops in adults over 45, but is increasingly occurring at younger ages
- Tends to run in families, often being triggered by inactivity and carrying excess weight around the middle
- Unlike Type 1, Type 2 diabetes sufferers are still able to produce their own insulin, but the following may occur
 - Not enough insulin for the body's needs;
 - 'Insulin resistance', where the cells in the body are resistant to the action of the insulin being produced; or
 - Combination of both.

Complications of untreated or poorly managed diabetes

- Kidney damage
- Increased likelihood of infections
- Eye damage
- Poor blood circulation in legs and feet, potentially leading to lower limb amputation
- Damage to feet nerves
- Significant likelihood of heart disease and stroke
- Sexual impotence
- Hypoglycaemia
- Diabetic coma

How can Just Better Care help?

Our trained community support workers and Registered nurses are able to assist with the measurement of a blood glucose level, monitoring of dietary intake and skin integrity and assisting with any personal care that may be required.

Many people with diabetes live a full life and only require a small amount of support to ensure they maintain their health.

References

[Diabetes Australia](#)

[Better Health Channel](#)

[Australian Diabetes Council](#)