

DIABETES: FACT SHEET

November 2018

What is Diabetes?

It occurs when the level of glucose (sugar) in your blood is too high. This could be because your body does not produce enough insulin, or because your body does not effectively use the insulin that it produces.

Insulin is a hormone necessary to carry glucose from the bloodstream into the cells where it is used for energy. If there is too little insulin, or a resistance to insulin, blood glucose levels continue to rise, because glucose is not removed from the bloodstream.

There are 2 main types of Diabetes

- Type 1 (insulin dependent)
People who have Type 1 Diabetes must inject insulin to survive, dosages are carefully Balanced.
- Type 2 (also known as maturity onset, or non-insulin dependent diabetes)
85-90% of people diagnosed have Type 2 Diabetes.
Often weight loss will reduce glucose levels.
Eating patterns and exercise play an important role in management.
The onset is gradual and hard to detect.
Tablets can also be prescribed to help improve control, however many people will eventually use Insulin.

Risk Factors

- Overweight or obese
- Physically inactive
- Family history of Diabetes
- Previous Diabetes in pregnancy (gestational diabetes)

Symptoms

- Unusual thirst
- Frequent urination
- Unusual weight loss
- Extreme fatigue, or lack of energy
- Blurred vision
- Frequent or recurring infections

Effects of Diabetes

- Kidney disease and kidney failure
- Heart disease
- Strokes
- Blindness
- Nerve damage causing loss of sensation particularly in the feet and legs
- Loss of toes and legs
- Erectile dysfunction and impotence

Diagnosis

- A finger prick blood test can give you an indication of your blood sugar level
- A formal diagnosis requires a blood test. The blood tests used are a formal fasting blood glucose test, a random blood glucose test, or an oral glucose tolerance test. Often more than one test will be done.

Dietary advice for managing Diabetes

- Healthy balanced diet
- Eat high fibre foods
- Limit added sugars
- Cut down on sodium and salt
- Choose healthier fats and foods high in Omega 3
- Portion with caution
- Reduce alcohol consumption

Diabetes in South Africa

The majority of people in South Africa have Type 2 diabetes, many of these cases are undiagnosed. There has been a major rise in the incidence of diabetes in South Africa due to rapid urbanisation, and unhealthy lifestyles. Diets in South Africa are high in fat, sugar and salt, and many people do not do enough exercise and lead sedentary lifestyles. There is a very strong link between obesity and diabetes, a new term called "disabesity" has been coined.

GET HEALTHY, GET MOVING & GET TESTED

NOVEMBER 14 WORLD DIABETES DAY