

Diabetes is a condition where the body does not make enough insulin or cannot use the insulin that it makes. You cannot live without insulin. Your body breaks down food into sugar. Insulin then acts like a key. It opens the door to get sugar from your blood into your cells. Your body needs sugar for energy. To keep your blood sugar at a good level you have to know what to eat, when to eat, how to exercise, and when to take your medicine.

The two most common types of diabetes are type 1 and type 2. In type 1 diabetes, the body does not make any insulin. Type 1 diabetes usually happens in children and young adults. People with type 1 diabetes must take insulin shots to stay alive.

In type 2 diabetes, the body makes insulin. It just cannot use it correctly. Over time, the body makes less insulin. When people first learn they have type 2 diabetes they may not need medicine. They may control their diabetes through what they eat and exercise. Some people will need to take pills. As time goes on, insulin may be needed to control blood sugars.

### **What are the signs of diabetes?**

Some people may have these signs when they find out they have diabetes. Others may not have any signs.

1. Thirsty
2. Tired
3. Hungry
4. Losing weight
5. Going to the bathroom more often
6. Sores that do not heal
7. Blurry vision
8. Numbness in feet
9. Overweight

If your blood sugar is too high for a long time, you may have problems with your heart, eyes, kidneys, nerves, and feet. Good blood sugar control can prevent these problems. There is not a cure for diabetes; but it can be controlled.

### **What you can do:**

- Get regular exercise
- Eat healthy foods
- Take your medicine
- Monitor your blood sugars
- Go to your doctor often
- Lose weight, if needed.

Your doctor will talk to you about a good blood sugar range. He or she will answer your questions and offer tips and support. Your doctor can also refer you to diabetes teachers so you can learn about diabetes.

**Quiz:**

1. Insulin must be taken by those individuals with
  - a) Gestational diabetes
  - b) Type 2 diabetes
  - c) Type 3 diabetes
  - d) Type 1 diabetes
2. True or False: Having good blood sugar control can prevent problems with the eyes, heart and kidney.
3. To keep your blood sugar at a good level you have to know what to eat, when to eat, how to exercise, and \_\_\_\_\_

Answers: 1) d, 2) True, 3) when to take your medicine