

Healthy Living: Diabetes¹

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What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition in which the body has difficulty making or using insulin. Insulin controls the amount of glucose (sugar) in our blood. When the body cannot make or use insulin properly, the result is high blood glucose. Controlling blood glucose reduces risk of health complications.

Having high blood glucose over a long time can result in:



vision loss or blindness,



high blood pressure and heart disease,



damage to blood vessels and nerves, like those in your hands and feet, and



damage to the kidneys.

Visit your doctor if you have any of the following:

- a need to urinate often (even at night)
- constant thirst or hunger
- weight loss that cannot be explained
- dry or itchy skin
- skin infections
- slow healing of cuts
- numbness or tingling in feet or hands
- blurry vision

Can diabetes be cured?

In most diabetes cases, there is no cure. But, diabetes can be controlled with an appropriate treatment plan. Some people control their diabetes with a proper diet and regular exercise. Others may also need oral diabetes medication or insulin injections.



To manage diabetes:

- Monitor your blood glucose.
- Be physically active every day.
- Follow a healthy diet, including eating less fat, sweets, and sodium, and choosing foods with fiber.
- Have your eyes, urine, blood pressure, and blood glucose checked regularly.
- Have a health professional check your feet at least once a year; check them yourself every day.
- Have your teeth cleaned at least twice a year.
- Don't smoke.

If you have diabetes, a registered dietitian (RD) can design a diet plan that is right for you.

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