

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action or both. Diabetes can lead to serious complications and premature death, but people with diabetes can take steps to control the disease and lower the risk of complications.

Make healthy food choices. Follow simple daily guidelines, like eating a variety of foods including fresh fruits and vegetables, limiting fat intake to 30% or less of daily calories and watching your portion size. Healthy eating habits can go a long way in preventing diabetes and other health problems.

Exercise. Regular exercise allows your body to use glucose without extra insulin. This helps combat insulin resistance and is what makes exercise helpful to people with diabetes. Never start an exercise program without checking with your doctor first.

MAJOR TYPES OF DIABETES

TYPE 1 DIABETES: Results from the body's failure to produce insulin, the hormone that "unlocks" the cells of the body, allowing glucose to enter and fuel them. It is estimated that 5-10% of Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have type 1 diabetes.

TYPE 2 DIABETES: Results from insulin resistance (a condition in which the body fails to properly use insulin), combined with relative insulin deficiency. Most Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have type 2 diabetes.

PRE-DIABETES: Pre-diabetes is a condition that occurs when a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. There are 54 million Americans who have pre-diabetes, in addition to the 20.8 million with diabetes.