

*Definition:*

- Diabetes is a disease in which your body cannot properly store and use fuel for energy. The fuel that your body needs is called glucose, a form of sugar. Glucose comes from foods such as breads, cereals, pasta, rice, potatoes, fruits and some vegetables. To use glucose, your body needs insulin. Insulin is made by a gland in your body called the pancreas. There are two major types of diabetes: type 1, and type 2.
  - Type 1 diabetes is when the body makes little or no insulin. It used to be called insulin-dependent or juvenile diabetes. This requires daily injections of insulin.
  - Type 2 diabetes: occurs when your body can't use the insulin it makes. If you have type 2, you may be able to keep your blood glucose levels in a target range by healthy eating, exercising, and taking medication.

There are 2 types of diabetic emergencies

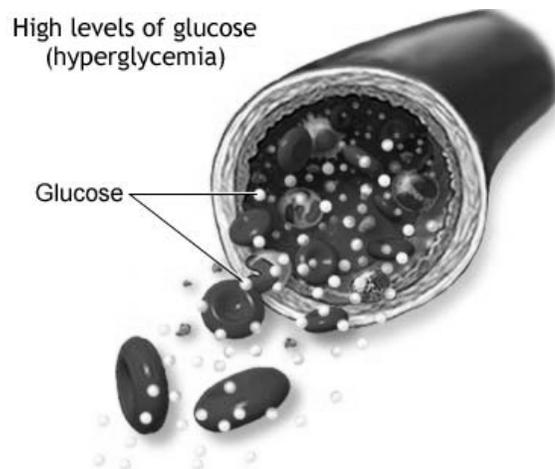
- Hyperglycemia (diabetic coma): this is where there is too much sugar in the blood, and not enough insulin. It can occur by not taking medication and/or by eating things high in glucose.
- Hypoglycemia (insulin shock): in this case there is not enough sugar and too much insulin. This can occur if too much insulin is taken or not enough glucose has been consumed.

*Causes of Hyperglycemia:*

- Eating food high in simple sugars.
- Not taking medication (insulin).

*Causes of Hypoglycemia:*

- Not eating at the right times (missing a meal).
- Being over active without having planned for it.
- Taking too much medication.



*Prevention:*

- There is no way to prevent type 1.
- Type 2 can be prevented by following a healthy lifestyle of regular physical activity, healthy eating, and controlling obesity.

*Warning signs:*

- Dizziness, drowsiness, and confusion.
- Rapid breathing.
- Rapid pulse.
- Feeling and looking ill.
- Unconsciousness.



*Helping:*

- Help the person take a bit of sugar (candy, juice, fruit, etc). However, artificial sweeteners such as NutraSweet or Aspartame are not effective. Monitor their condition and do not hesitate to call an ambulance if their condition does not improve within a couple of minutes. Do NOT administer medication; this is reserved for medical professionals only.

*Notes:*

- Diabetes is a life-long condition. High blood glucose levels over a long period of time can cause blindness, heart disease, kidney problem, amputations, nerve damage, and erectile dysfunction. Good diabetic care and management can delay or prevent the onset of these complications.

Diabetes type 2 is on the rise dramatically in industrialized countries, especially in children. The experts believe that the main causes are that more people are over weight, most people do are not physically active, and most people have poor eating habits. This is affecting children as well not just older adults. Once someone becomes diabetic there is no cure. For the rest of their lives they will need to test their sugar levels and, depending on their condition, take medication or insulin injections. In addition, the damage that diabetes causes internally will continue.

The best cure for diabetes is prevention. Do some form of physical activity everyday, eat healthy and avoid junk food, and lose excess fat. And, if family members are diabetic there may be a genetic predisposition, which means all family members should be tested once a year.

SOME PEOPLE MAY BE DIABETIC BUT HAVE YET TO SEEK PROPER DIAGNOSIS. THIS IS A DANGEROUS SITUATION BECAUSE DAMAGE IS BEING DONE TO THE BODY IF PROPER MEDICAL ADVICE IS NOT FOLLOWED. WARNING SIGNS: EXCESSIVE THIRST AND FREQUENT URINATION, DRY MOUTH AND LIPS, TROUBLE WITH VISION, ALWAYS HUNGRY, ALWAYS TIRED, UNEXPLAINABLE WEIGHT LOSS, BREATH THAT SMELLS LIKE A ROTTEN APPLE OR ALCOHOL OR VERY SWEET.