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# Diabetes Mellitus

## What is diabetes mellitus?

**Diabetes mellitus** (also referred to simply as diabetes) is a disease that changes how the body uses glucose (blood sugar). When you eat, you either take in glucose or create it inside your body using the food you eat. People with diabetes have too much glucose in their blood. Too much glucose in your blood can cause health complications. Over 9 million Americans have diabetes.

## What are the different types of diabetes?

There are three general types of diabetes. **Type I, type II, and gestational.**

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Type I diabetes is often diagnosed in children.

Type II diabetes is far more common than type I. It is found in 90-95% of all diabetes cases. Also unlike type I, type II diabetes is usually diagnosed in adults.



Gestational diabetes is experienced by pregnant women.

In this type of diabetes, the body cannot correctly use insulin.

Gestational diabetes can happen during pregnancy. It also causes high levels of glucose in the blood but most often goes away when the baby is born. It is likely caused by hormones produced by the placenta that stop insulin from working properly. If you do not get treatment, gestational diabetes can harm the growing fetus. Women who have experienced gestational diabetes are at risk for developing type II diabetes postpartum.

## What is insulin?

Insulin is a key hormone that is made in the pancreas. When there is

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## What causes diabetes?

Scientists do not really know what causes type I diabetes, but it is likely due to genetics. Becoming exposed to some viruses may also contribute to development of type I diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes is due to a combination of things. Genetics, your environment, and your lifestyle all contribute. Typically, the main reason people get type II diabetes is because they are overweight and inactive.

While it is not clear why some women develop gestational diabetes, there are some factors that increase the risk. Gestational diabetes is more common in women over the age of 25, women with a family history of diabetes, women who are overweight, and women who are nonwhite.

## What are the symptoms of diabetes?

In some cases, people with diabetes do not realize that they have it. Type II and gestational



Genetics can contribute to development of diabetes.

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## **What are some health effects of diabetes?**

Diabetes can lead to other health problems and even death. Diabetics are twice as likely to die as their healthy peers.

Type I diabetes can lead to diseases of the heart and blood vessels, skin problems, and pregnancy complications, as well as damage to nerves, kidneys, eyes, and feet.

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## **How is diabetes treated?**

People with any type of diabetes can do things to control the disease, such as eating a healthy and balanced diet that is low in simple sugars, exercising regularly, keeping track of their blood glucose, and, in some cases, taking insulin and/or



**Diabetes can be controlled with a healthy diet and exercise, and, in some cases, insulin injections.**

medications.

**Reading Comprehension Questions:**

1. What is diabetes?
2. What are the
3. What is common to all three types?
4. When does
5. What is insulin?
6. List three
7. List three.
8. List three potential effects of diabetes (indicate which type it may be due to).

**Extension Questions: You will need to do some additional research to answer these.**

9. If there are no symptoms, how do pregnant women know if they have diabetes?
10. What
11. Create an

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