

## Preventing or delaying diabetes

Parents who have diabetes or who are at risk of developing diabetes should encourage their children to exercise regularly, eat properly, and avoid obesity.

Proper diet and daily exercise may help prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

## Medical discoveries

Scientists have developed insulin and other drugs for the treatment of diabetes. Currently, a cure does not exist.

Recent advances in diabetes research include:

- laser treatments for diabetic eye disease;
- pancreas transplants;
- islet cell transplants;
- artificial pancreas development.

Persons with diabetes should accept personal responsibility for controlling their diabetes for life.

## Diabetes projects for Lions clubs

Throughout the world, Lions clubs sponsor local service projects that aid persons with diabetes.

Before selecting a project, Lions

should learn about the needs of persons with diabetes. Inviting a speaker to a club meeting is one way of becoming more informed about diabetes. Local health care facilities or diabetes associations often have speakers available for this purpose.

After this initial introduction to the topic of diabetes, clubs may decide to further their public awareness efforts. Because November is Lions Diabetes Awareness Month, this may be an appropriate time to conduct a service project.

Suggestions for club-level diabetes service projects include:

- donating time to a local diabetes clinic;
- helping healthcare professionals perform diabetes screenings at local senior citizen centers, retirement homes, churches, etc.;
- distributing diabetes brochures (such as this one) at local health fairs;
- organizing a STRIDES Walk for Diabetes Awareness;
- purchasing glucose testing machines and test strips for persons with diabetes;
- organizing a diabetes support group or providing information on existing support groups;
- sponsoring persons with diabetes to attend diabetes camp;
- donating funds for diabetes research;
- conducting special fundraisers for diabetes;
- sponsoring a mobile unit that screens for diabetic retinopathy.

At the district or multiple district level, Lions can:

- present a diabetes program at their district or multiple district convention;
- distribute diabetes information to every physician and eye doctor in their area;
- donate equipment for diabetes or diabetic retinopathy to a medical facility;
- organize a diabetes camping program for adults or children;
- educate persons with diabetes, their families, and the general public about the psychological effects of diabetes;
- organize a fundraiser for diabetes research;
- sponsor a mobile unit that screens for diabetes;
- organize a STRIDES Walk for Diabetes Awareness.



*For more information, contact:*

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Official Publication of Lions Clubs International  
IAD-162 6M 5/06 Printed in USA

heredity

type 1

type 2

exercise

# DIABETES

## Nutrition

new discoveries

diabetic  
retinopathy

**M**ost likely, you have a relative, neighbor, or co-worker who has diabetes. According to the World Health Organization, 120 million people in the world have diabetes

In the USA alone, there are 10.3 million persons with diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, there are another 5.5 million Americans who are unaware that they have diabetes. You - or someone you love - may be among that unaware population.

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disorder in which the body is unable to store and use food energy properly. The main source of fuel for human bodies is a simple sugar called glucose. During digestion, the pancreas should produce insulin, which converts food into glucose to give the body energy.

However, when someone has diabetes, one of the following conditions applies:

- the pancreas does not produce insulin;
- the pancreas produces a small amount of insulin;
- cells do not respond to the insulin that is produced.

As a result, glucose is neither absorbed nor stored. It builds up in the blood and spills into the urine. Thus, the body loses its main source of fuel.

## Diabetes risk factors

Are you:

- more than 45 years old;
- overweight;
- a person with high blood pressure (at or above 140/90)
- from a family with a history of diabetes;
- a woman who has given birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds (four kilograms);
- lacking in regular exercise?

If you answered “yes” to one or more of these questions, you may be at risk for diabetes.

Millions of people are unaware that they have diabetes. Often, they do not experience any symptoms. However, see your health care professional if you experience:

- unusual thirst;
- frequent urination;
- a weight loss without trying.

## Different types of diabetes

**Type 1 diabetes** - is caused by destruction of the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas.

- Type 1 diabetes most often occurs in children and young adults.
- The peak years for developing type 1 diabetes are 10 to 12 in girls; 12 to 14 in boys.

- Persons with type 1 diabetes must receive daily injections of insulin.
- Type 1 diabetes can be hereditary.
- Five to 10% of all cases of diabetes are type 1.

**Type 2 diabetes** - is a disorder resulting from the body’s inability to produce insulin or use insulin properly. This type of diabetes usually affects persons who are more than 45 years of age, are overweight, and who do not exercise. Today, however, young people are increasingly being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

- Persons with type 2 diabetes may take medication or they may require insulin injections.
- Diet and exercise help control type 2 diabetes in some cases.
- Ninety to 95% of all cases of diabetes are type 2.

The symptoms of type 1 diabetes are usually sudden and severe. Persons with type 2 diabetes may experience no symptoms at all. By the time warning signs appear, the person may already have type 2 diabetes.

**Gestational diabetes** - develops and lasts throughout pregnancy.

- Two to five percent of pregnant women develop gestational diabetes.
- These women are at increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes at a later date.

**Other causes of diabetes** - Genetic factors, surgery, drugs and medications, malnutrition, infections, and other illnesses can result in diabetes.

## Complications of diabetes

**Blindness** - A condition known as diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in people between the ages of 20 and 74.

**Kidney disease** - Diabetes is the leading cause of diabetic nephropathy, an end-stage renal disease. Persons with diabetes account for 40% of all new cases.

**Nerve disease and amputations** - About 60-70% of people with diabetes have mild to severe nerve damage. Persons with severe nerve damage often undergo lower limb amputations.

**Heart disease and stroke** - Persons with diabetes are two to four times more likely to suffer a stroke or to develop heart disease.

**Childbirth** - Women with diabetes have an increased risk of:

- giving birth to a baby with congenital malformations if they do not receive preconception care;
- having a large birth-weight baby.