



*Prevention And Management*  
**TYPE 2 DIABETES AWARENESS**

*By the American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc.*

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# What Is Type 2 Diabetes?

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Type 2 diabetes is a condition that often takes several years to fully develop within the body. While the exact cause of type 2 diabetes usually comes down to a combination of several contributing factors, the changes within the body are relatively similar among these cases.

Here's a look at what happens within the body when you have type 2 diabetes, according to the [Mayo Clinic](#).

Your body depends on blood glucose as a source of energy and the insulin created within the pancreas helps to transport that glucose to your cells as fuel. When you have type 2 diabetes, your cells are resistant to the entry of blood glucose, which temporarily sends your insulin production into overdrive.

Eventually, the body slows down insulin production given the resistance of the cells to accept glucose as energy. Instead of being pushed into your body cells with the assistance of insulin, the blood glucose within your body continues to rise. This is what causes high blood sugar and, at a certain point, becomes your body's norm.

The result is type 2 diabetes.

## Prediabetes

Before type 2 diabetes officially develops, you may actually have a condition known as prediabetes. This is a condition characterized by high blood sugar that's bordering on the criteria for being diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. Thankfully, there

are steps you can take to reverse prediabetes and avoid an eventual type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

## **Type 1 Diabetes**

Though less common than type 2 diabetes, type 1 diabetes can be just as severe. This condition typically develops during childhood and most often results from the body being unable to produce insulin at all. As a result, the treatment of type 1 diabetes typically involves self-injection of insulin periodically or the use of an insulin pump.

# Type 2 Diabetes: Staggering Statistics

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As the average American diet continues to worsen and obesity rates in America rapidly skyrocket, it's clear that type 2 diabetes has become an epidemic-sized problem. To fully understand just how large a role this disease plays in the nation, you need to take a look at the relevant statistics.

Here's a look at statistics that can help to put the severity of type 2 diabetes into perspective.

- Over 10% of the American population has type 2 diabetes ([DRIF](#)).
- Nearly 27% of senior citizens aged 65 and older have type 2 diabetes in America ([ADA](#)).
- About 20% of American children aged 12 to 18 have prediabetes ([CDC](#)).
- Over 83,000 Americans died in 2017 as a result of diabetes, making it the 7th leading cause of death in the nation ([DRIF](#)).
- In 2010, there were over 630,000 hospital visits from those with diabetes ([AHA](#)).
- In 2018 alone, about 1.5 million new cases of diabetes were diagnosed ([DRIF](#)).
- Over 7 million Americans don't even know that they have diabetes ([ADA](#)).
- About 1 in 3 American adults have prediabetes ([CDC](#)).
- Nearly 68% of those aged 65 and older with diabetes will die of heart disease ([AHA](#)).

Based on the statistics above, you can see that diabetes is a rapidly growing problem in America, it's a condition that's beginning to affect younger populations more than previously thought, and it's known for causing severe health consequences.



# How Is Type 2 Diabetes Diagnosed

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Because type 2 diabetes doesn't always manifest itself in the form of physical symptoms, many cases will go undiagnosed for months or even years.

In fact, the [American Diabetes Association](#) states that approximately 7 million cases of type 2 diabetes are currently undiagnosed.



A proper type 2 diabetes diagnosis will come from a medical professional. Common forms of testing include A1C, blood glucose, and the Oral Glucose Tolerance Test.

Here's an overview of each test and what the results may show, according to the [American Diabetes Association](#).

- **A1C:** This test will detect your average blood glucose level over the course of the last several months without having to fast prior to the test. A score of 6.5% or greater is considered "diabetes."
- **Blood Glucose:** This test will detect your current blood sugar level after a period of 8 or more hours fasting. A score of 126 mg/dl or greater is considered "diabetes."
- **Oral Glucose Tolerance Test:** This test will detect how your body responds to sugar intake, testing your blood sugar levels a few hours after drinking a sweet drink. A score of 200 mg/dl or greater is considered "diabetes."

Any of these tests can reasonably be used to detect and diagnose prediabetes or type 2 diabetes. Before your doctor pursues any of these testing routes, you'll likely have to display some of the more common signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes first.

## **Signs And Symptoms**

- Increased levels of thirst and hunger
- More frequent urination
- Weight loss
- Severe fatigue or tiredness
- Infections or wounds that take long to heal
- Mood changes
- Tingling sensations (pins and needles) in the extremities

If you notice any of these signs or symptoms developing over a period of time, be sure to visit your doctor as soon as possible to rule out type 2 diabetes.

## **Causes**

Type 2 diabetes will occur when the body either experiences complete insulin resistance or begins producing lower than normal levels of insulin. The result is excess blood glucose, which leads to extended periods of high blood sugar and, thus, a type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

To understand what actually causes type 2 diabetes, you need to learn about what causes insulin resistance in the first place.

The [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#) states that the following factors may lead to insulin resistance within the body:

- Being obese or overweight
- Eating a poor or unbalanced diet
- Not getting enough physical activity
- Family history and genetic factors



Interestingly enough, the causes of type 2 diabetes are also considered risk factors and contributing factors. That's because this condition typically develops after prolonged exposure to several of these factors.

## Risk Factors

While it's true that insulin resistance may ultimately develop on its own, there are a few risk factors that greatly increase your odds of being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Here's a look at what some common risk factors for type 2 diabetes are.

- **Age:** The risk of developing type 2 diabetes greatly increases as you get older. Research shows that just 4.2% of Americans aged 18 to 44 have type 2 diabetes while the risk increases to 17.5% as you reach the age of 45. This is

likely due to prolonged exposure to sugar and increased risk of having common comorbidities like heart disease and hypertension ([CDC](#)).

- **Obesity:** There's a direct link between body weight and the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Research shows that about 9 in 10 American adults with diabetes are classified as overweight or obese. This is likely caused by the increased odds of insulin resistance that comes with a greater number of fat cells ([ASMBS](#)).
- **Ethnicity:** It appears that some ethnicities are more likely to receive an eventual type 2 diabetes diagnosis than others. Collected data demonstrates that about 14.7% of American Indians and Alaskan Natives, 12.5% of Hispanics, and 11.7% of non-Hispanic Blacks have diabetes. This connection is likely due to environmental influences ([FDA](#)).
- **Blood Pressure:** Type 2 diabetes and hypertension are two conditions that tend to go hand-in-hand. In fact, research shows that about 2 in 3 people with type 2 diabetes also have high blood pressure. While it's unclear which conditions are causing the other, it's known that diabetes hardens arteries and forces the heart to work more intensely ([ADA](#)).

These are just a few of the more common risk factors seen in those with type 2 diabetes. Other risk factors include having high cholesterol, having a heart disease diagnosis, and having a previous diagnosis of gestational diabetes.

# Can Type 2 Diabetes Be Prevented?

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Unlike type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes is a condition that typically develops in



adulthood. With that said, it's not uncommon to refer to type 2 diabetes as a "lifestyle disease." Fortunately, that means many cases of type 2 diabetes are entirely preventable by taking preventive measures.

Examples of confirmed type 2 diabetes prevention methods include:

- **Getting Down to a Healthy Weight:** Being overweight or obese means a greater proportion of fat cells in your body, as compared to muscle cells. This can cause insulin resistance over time. Research shows that losing 5% of your body weight can lower your risk of type 2 diabetes by up to 58%. Reducing your risk can be as simple as creating a 500 calorie deficit daily through diet and exercise ([John Hopkins Medicine](#)).
- **Eating a Healthy Balanced Diet:** The nutrients you're using to fuel your body may also be increasing your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Studies show that refined carbohydrates and starchy foods (like white bread or potato products) increase your odds. Preventing diabetes through your diet means choosing simple carbs from fruits and vegetables and consuming fewer sugary beverages ([Harvard T.H. Chan](#)).
- **Getting and Staying Active:** Most physical activity will encourage blood glucose to enter into your body cells rather than to remain in the blood,

effectively lowering blood sugar levels. Studies show that as little as 20 minutes of mild exercise per day can reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes by up to 46%. Just 150 minutes of exercise per week can lower your risk substantially ([Diabetes Care](#)).

While you can't change risk factors like your ethnicity, family history, or age, there are plenty of things that you can do to keep type 2 diabetes at bay. You can't entirely prevent this condition, but targeting your diet, exercise, and weight are proven methods of lowering your risk.

# Contributing Factors

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Along with risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes, there are also several contributing factors that increase your risk of such a diagnosis. These contributing factors are most often related to lifestyle choices that you may make in your daily life.

Here's a look at how your lifestyle may be increasing your risk of type 2 diabetes.

- **Smoking Cigarettes:** It's evident through research that cigarettes are harmful to the body on all fronts, but the damage smoking does to your body's cells is the presumed link to diabetes. Smoking causes inflammation within your cells, which can eventually lead to insulin resistance. In fact, research shows that heavy smokers are at a 40% increased risk of developing diabetes ([CDC](#)).
- **Being Overweight:** Data recorded over the last several decades pinpoints being obese or overweight as a clear indicator that a diabetes diagnosis is on the horizon. The risk of accompanying insulin resistance is of greatest concern to those with a BMI of 30 or higher. Being overweight can be caused by environmental influences like a severely unhealthy diet and a lack of exercise ([Diabetes Care](#)).
- **Lack of Quality Sleep:** Many people overlook the importance of sleep and simply view it as a way to wake up refreshed in the morning. While it's unclear of the exact reasoning, a lack of quality sleep seems to increase insulin resistance in the body. Studies show that getting fewer than 5 hours

of sleep per night may double your risk of diabetes, as compared to getting 7 or more hours per night ([Sleep](#)).

While it's uncommon for any of these contributing factors to lead to type 2 diabetes on their own, they do somewhat increase your odds. Since these are related to your lifestyle and daily habits, that means there are some changes you can make to lower your risk.



# What To Do Once Diagnosed: Key Lifestyle Choices

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Receiving a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes can be depression and possibly traumatic. Thankfully, there are plenty of things that you can do in your personal life to improve your prognosis or even potentially reverse it later on.

Here are some tips for lifestyle changes you can make post-diagnosis.

- Reduce your intake of complex carbohydrates, refined grains, sugar, and trans fats.
- Lose weight to get your BMI within the 18.5 to 24.9 range.
- Get at least 20 minutes of exercise per day (150 minutes per week).
- Portion your meals properly and add variety to your diet.
- Monitor your blood sugar levels as needed, especially if you're on insulin.
- Pursue medication options, like Metformin, which can help to keep your blood glucose levels in a healthy range.
- Quit smoking and reduce your alcohol intake when possible.

The worst thing you can do after a type 2 diabetes diagnosis is nothing. There are several lifestyle factors that contributed to your diagnosis and the only way to improve the outlook of this condition is by making appropriate lifestyle changes and monitoring your condition closely.

# Health Risks: Type 2 Diabetes Co-Morbidities

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It's well-documented that type 2 diabetes on its own may come with a poor prognosis or even lead to an early death. However, there are plenty of other health risks, such as comorbidities, that come with type 2 diabetes as well.

Here's a glimpse of the other health risks that come with this condition.

## Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)

Diabetes and hypertension are two conditions that often occur together, with up to 80% of those with type 2 diabetes having high blood pressure as well. Though the exact link is unclear, there appears to be some evidence that diabetes may cause the hardening of the arteries and damage to the blood vessels. This forces the heart to work harder ([Current Atherosclerosis Reports](#)).

## Stroke

Prolonged periods of high blood sugar are known to increase fatty deposits within the blood vessels or even make them stiffer than usual. The impacted blood flow through the blood vessels makes a blockage or a clot more likely, as seen in a stroke. The risk is so severe that diabetes might increase the risk of having a stroke by as much as 150% ([ADA](#)).

## Heart Disease

Heart disease is known as the leading cause of death in Americans and takes into account any disorders that impact how the cardiovascular system functions. The

stiffening of arteries and narrowing of blood vessels that comes with diabetes puts excess strain on this system. As a result, about 33% of men and 40% of women with diabetes also have a cardiovascular condition ([World Journal of Diabetes](#)).

## Life Expectancy

Diabetes impacts nearly every system in the body and plays an important role in your suspected



life expectancy. Due to the severe damage that this condition can cause and the increased risk of developing comorbidities, studies have shown that type 2 diabetes may cut a life expectancy short 7.9 years in men and about 8.2 in women ([Diabetes Care](#)).

## Conditions Unique to Diabetics

Diabetes also comes with the risk of developing conditions unique to diabetes sufferers. Many of these conditions will result from poor blood flow through the blood vessels and within the arteries in the body.

Those conditions include:

- **Diabetic Neuropathy:** Prolonged periods of high blood sugar can be detrimental to your blood flow and the nerves within your body, as seen in diabetic neuropathy. This condition typically impacts the lower extremities, particularly the feet, and may cause loss of feeling in the feet and an

increased risk of infection. When severe, diabetic neuropathy may require amputation of the foot or leg ([Mayo Clinic](#)).

- **Diabetic Kidney Issues:** The combination of high blood pressure and high blood sugar seen in diabetics can lead to excess pressure on the kidneys, causing kidney damage in up to 25% of diabetics. This is sometimes referred to as diabetic nephropathy and can cause weakness, loss of appetite, and irreversible kidney failure in those who have type 2 diabetes ([NIDDK](#))
- **Diabetic Retinopathy:** Along with damage to the blood vessels in the eyes as a result of high blood sugar comes the risk of developing diabetic retinopathy, a condition seen in about 40% of diabetics. This condition often doesn't show symptoms. Yet, in severe instances of diabetic retinopathy, this condition can cause severe vision troubles, bleeding in the eyes, and even blindness ([NEI](#)).

The risk of diabetes increases as you develop more risk factors and contributing factors. With that said, there is clear data that shows that a type 2 diabetes diagnosis can *also* be a risk factor for future health conditions. That means preventing diabetes altogether can *also* lower your risk of stroke, heart disease, and a shortened life expectancy.

# Reversing Type 2 Diabetes

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Just as type 2 diabetes is mostly preventable, there have also been instances where lifestyle changes were able to reverse a type 2 diabetes diagnosis. However, it's important to note that this isn't the norm and that many who receive this diagnosis will maintain it for the remainder of their lives.

Here's how that can be possible.

The first way that you can potentially reverse type 2 diabetes is through intense dietary changes. One study published in the [Journal of Natural Science, Biology and Medicine](#) found that, over the course of 3 months, those who consumed fewer calories (about 1,000 fewer) and lost weight (about 7 pounds) were more likely to reverse their type 2 diabetes diagnosis.

There have also been studies that have shown a link between getting bariatric surgery (weight loss surgery) and reversing a type 2 diabetes diagnosis. Research published in [Diabetes Care](#) proved that bariatric surgery might prevent diabetes-related deaths in about 90% of cases. That's likely due to the dramatically lower body weight, fewer calories consumed, and lower blood pressure that comes with this type of surgery.

# Low Carb Diet

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Carbohydrates are considered the body's go-to source of energy on a daily basis. This macronutrient is stored in the body in the form of glucose. That means diets high in carbohydrates can cause high blood sugar or type 2 diabetes. With that said, a low carb diet can help to prevent or even treat type 2 diabetes.

Most people will consume up to 60% of their daily calories from carbohydrates without issue. When you have diabetes or prediabetes, you'll want to cut down your calories from carbohydrates to just



45% of your daily total. The [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) suggests limiting your carb intake to 60 to 75 grams per meal.

**A low carb diet means you'll have to focus on avoiding certain foods that are high in carbs. That means avoiding and/or limiting:**

- Alcohol
- Starchy foods (white bread & pasta, rice, potatoes, and cereal)
- Processed & refined foods
- Sugar, sugary foods, and beverages (soda, energy drinks, pastries, table sugar, etc.)

Keep in mind that your body *does* need some carbohydrates each day to stay healthy and have energy. A no-carb diet should not be an option whether you have diabetes or not.

## Diets For Diabetics

The ketogenic diet is a low carb, a high fat diet that tends to be popular in those with diabetes due to the limited effects on blood sugar. You'll only be consuming 50 grams of carbohydrates per day, though 20 grams or fewer could be even better for your blood sugar. About 75% of your calories will come from fat and there are no upper guidelines when it comes to caloric intake.



The ketogenic diet is also known for aiding with weight loss.

The Atkins Diet is very similar to the ketogenic diet in principle, but you'll slowly be increasing how many carbs you eat per day as you progress on the diet. This can be problematic if you have diabetes or unstable blood sugar levels.



## List Of Low Carb Foods

Avoiding high carb foods is important when you have type 2 diabetes, but you need to make sure that you're still consuming both carbs and calories throughout the day. With that said, you need to know which foods are green-lighted for diabetics to maintain a healthy diet.

Here's a list of quality low carb foods you'll want to think about adding to your diet.

### Protein

- Eggs have 0 carbs
- All Red Meat, poultry, turkey, veal, organ meats, lamb and fowl have 0 carbs
- All fish has 0 carbs



### Seafood

- Shrimp, crawfish, and crab have 0 carbs
- Other seafood, like oysters, mussels, lobster, clams, and others do have small amounts of carbs. Oysters have the most with 12.4 grams of carbs per 6 ounce serving





## Fats

- Butter, mayo, and oils (best: olive, soy, avocado, coconut, sunflower, canola) have 0 carbs
- Avocados have 4.8 grams of carbs each
- Various salad dressings – check labels for carb counts

## Vegetables

The following have very little carbs and are perfect choices for a strict low carb diet. As a rule, all non-starchy vegetables have few carbs. Starchy vegetables like carrots, corn, potatoes, and squash will have higher counts.

- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Alfalfa Sprouts
- Jicama
- Parsley
- Bell Peppers
- Radicchio
- Radishes
- Artichoke
- Daikon
- Endive
- Escarole



- Arugula
- Bok Choy
- Celery
- Chicory Greens
- Green Onions
- Cucumber
- Fennel
- All lettuce
- Asparagus
- Bamboo Shoots
- Broccoli -
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Chard
- Collard Greens
- Hearts of Palm
- Kale



## Fruit

The following fruits are lowest in carbs.

- Limes
- Lemons
- Rhubarb



- Berries
- Cantaloupe
- Red Grapefruit

## Dairy

- Heavy cream has almost 0 carbs.
- Half and half, full fat Greek yogurt, full fat sour cream, and unsweetened almond milk have some carbs, check the labels.
- The lowest carb cheeses include:
  - Muenster
  - Provolone
  - Neufchatel
  - Gouda
  - Mozzarella
  - Ricotta
  - Blue Cheese
  - Edam
  - Gruyere Cheese
  - Cheddar
  - Fontina
  - Havarti
  - Parmesan
  - Monterey



## Nuts and Seeds

- The lowest carb nuts are almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, macadamia nuts, pine nuts and walnuts. Pure no sugar added nut butters are low in carbs too.
- Sunflowers seeds have few carbs.

## Zero Carb Drinks

- Water
- Unsweetened Tea
- Unsweetened Coffee
- Club soda and sugar free sparkling waters
- 0 calorie seltzers



## Miscellaneous Foods

- Shirataki Noodles have 0 carbs
- All vinegars have 0 Carbs
- Soy Sauce is low in carbs
- Mustard has 0 Carbs
- Most Hot Sauces have 0 Carbs
- Pickles are low in carbs

Be sure to check the nutrition label on foods before and beverages before deciding to consume them. Many unexpected foods, such as bacon, are sprinkled with sugar or other carbs to improve their taste.

## Other Sweeteners

Many believe that a diabetes diagnosis means that they won't be able to consume sweetened foods ever again. While you should limit your intake of sugar given the effect it has on your blood sugar, there are noted alternatives to regular table sugar.

The artificial or alternative sweeteners generally seen as "safe" for those with diabetes include:

- Honey
- Stevia
- Tagatose
- Aspartame
- Sucralose

Each of these is known to have little to no effect on your blood sugar. With that said, there are some potential downsides of consuming these too often, so be sure to use these sweeteners in moderation as well.

## Doctor Managed Care

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Once you receive a diabetes diagnosis and make appropriate changes to your lifestyle and diet, it's important to follow-up with medical professionals in order to maintain a good prognosis. You should be visiting your doctor two to three times per year for check-ups on your condition.

You'll likely undergo blood testing several times per year to keep track of your A1C and blood glucose levels. Your doctor may also check for severe side effects of type 2 diabetes, such as diabetic neuropathy or diabetic retinopathy.

In addition to undergoing the appropriate testing, your doctor may prescribe medication to help you to better control your blood sugar levels throughout the day. That includes [Metformin](#), an oral medication taken by diabetics to improve the body's control of insulin and blood sugar.

Most people with type 2 diabetes will also work one-on-one with an endocrinologist.

# Resources: Diabetes

## Organizations/Foundation

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If you or someone you know has type 2 diabetes, it's important to do your research to learn a little bit more about the condition. This will help you to understand what you should expect, what you can do to treat it, and what your prognosis really is.

To learn more, take a look at these diabetes foundations and organizations.

- [American Diabetes Association](#): This is a national organization in the U.S. seeking to share information about diabetes, including how to prevent it and how to treat it post-diagnosis. The organization takes on an advocacy role and raises money for both awareness and research, spending nearly \$50 million on research in 2017 alone.
- [World Diabetes Association](#): This organization takes on more of a global perspective, understanding that diabetes is a condition most prominent in third-world countries. The goal of the organization is to increase access to care, aid in prevention tactics, and raise awareness for diabetes.
- [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#): This is a U.S. government-based organization looking to spread important information related to diabetes as well as digestive and kidney diseases. This program also funds and performs research to make headway in the treatment and prevention of diabetes.

Along with major organizations like those above, there are also plenty of journals and informative publications that can provide you with additional type 2 diabetes information.

**These publications include:**

- [BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care](#)
- [Clinical Diabetes](#)
- [Diabetes](#)
- [Diabetes Care](#)
- [Diabetes Spectrum](#)

You can also refer to the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#) or the [World Health Organization](#) for additional data.



## Final Thoughts

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Type 2 diabetes is a condition that's mostly preventable yet is becoming more and more common in American adults. In fact, the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in America has already surpassed the predictions developed by researchers several years ago, now looking to reach nearly 55 million cases by the year 2030 ([Population Health Management](#)).

Despite this worrying trend, there are plenty of ways that you can try to prevent an eventual diagnosis. That includes staying active, getting down to a healthy body weight, eating healthy (low carbs), and avoiding cigarette smoking. Pursuing consistent testing with your doctor can also help you to catch diabetes while in the prediabetes stage and, thus, reverse your risk.

Keep in mind that while some cases of type 2 diabetes can be reversed with weight loss or even bariatric surgery, there is no "magic cure." Staying healthy and avoiding this diagnosis in the first place can help to extend your lifespan while also reducing your risk of stroke, high blood pressure, and kidney disease.