

# **DIABETES FACTSHEET**



## **What is Diabetes?**

Diabetes is a chronic disease that is characterised by high blood glucose levels resulting from the body not producing insulin or using it properly. Insulin is a hormone needed for glucose to enter the cells and be converted to energy.

There are 3 types of diabetes:

### **Type 1 Diabetes** (insulin dependent)

- Not caused by lifestyle factors
- One of the most chronic childhood diseases
- One of the most common chronic child hood diseases
- Occurs when the pancreas gland no longer produces the insulin needed



#### *Treatment:*

Life long administration of insulin everyday, regular blood glucose level tests, healthy eating plan and regular physical activity.

### **Type 2 Diabetes** (non insulin dependent)

- Represents 85 to 90% of all cases of diabetes
- Occurs when the pancreas is not producing enough insulin and the insulin is not working effectively
- A genetic predisposition and lifestyle factors contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes
- Risk factors include overweight/obesity.

#### *Treatment:*

Lifestyle modification such as change in diet and regular exercise, which may progress to include insulin injections.

### **Gestational Diabetes**

- Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes which occurs in pregnancy and should disappear after the birth.
- Occurs in less than 9% of pregnancies
- Increases the risk of pregnancy complications
- Increases the risk for women to develop Type 2 diabetes later in life

## **Diabetes – The Facts**

- Diabetes is Australia's fastest growing chronic disease
- It is the seventh highest cause of death in Australia
- People with diabetes are almost 3 times more likely to have high blood pressure, obesity or elevated blood fats eg cholesterol
- People with diabetes are 2 to 3 times more likely to have cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke)
- 65% to 85% of people with diabetes will die of coronary heart disease compared to 2.5% without diabetes

- Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure
- 5% of people with diabetes will experience foot ulcers
- Of the 3000 amputations in people with diabetes, most are preventable
- Visual problems are common in people with diabetes
- Diabetes is the most common cause of blindness for people under 60
- 1,048 people are diagnosed every week, 150 people every day
- An average of 55,000 people are diagnosed every year
- Type 2 diabetes, usually found in middle age, is increasingly being diagnosed in children

## **Signs and Symptoms of Diabetes**

If you have these symptoms, please ask your doctor or health professional about getting tested for diabetes.

- Increased thirst
- Frequent urination
- Feeling tired and lethargic – no energy
- Constant hunger
- Slow healing of cuts
- Itching, skin infections
- Blurred vision
- Unexplained weight loss (Type 1 diabetes)
- Gradual weight gain (Type 2 diabetes)
- Tingling or numbness in the hands or feet
- Irritability and mood swings
- Feeling dizzy
- Headaches
- Leg cramps



## **Type 2 Diabetes - Risk Factors**

Are you:

- Over 55 years of age?
- Over 45 years of age AND overweight?
- Over 45 years of age AND have immediate family member with Type 2 diabetes?
- Over 45 years of age AND have high blood pressure?
- Over 35 years of age and from an Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island, Pacific Island, Indian subcontinent, or Chinese cultural background?
- Have heart disease or have had a heart attack?
- Had diabetes when pregnant (gestational diabetes)?
- Have impaired glucose intolerance (IGT) or impaired fasting glucose (IFG)?
- Have polycystic ovary syndrome AND are overweight?

*If one or more of the above applies to you then you are at risk of Type 2 diabetes and need to talk to your doctor or health professional about getting tested and making some changes to your lifestyle.*

## \*\*\*REMEMBER - TYPE 2 DIABETES IS PREVENTABLE!\*\*\*



Here is what you need to do:

1. Exercise – start with a gentle half hour walk a day.
2. Eat a Healthy Diet – see below
3. Stop Smoking – for help and tips go to the Quit website [www.quitwa.com](http://www.quitwa.com)
4. Drink Alcohol in Moderation

### **Diabetes and Diet**

By changing your diet, you can help control your blood glucose levels. The best plan is to reduce the amount of simple sugars and refined carbohydrates you consume while increasing the amount of complex carbohydrates and fibre in your diet. Complex carbohydrates such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are broken down slowly by the body, leading to a slower release of glucose into the blood stream. Simple carbohydrates, such as sugars and highly processed or refined foods, are broken down quickly, leading to a rapid rise in blood sugar.

People with diabetes should also eat less saturated fat.

#### **Main points to remember:**

- ✓ Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods
- ✓ Eat a diet low in fat and, particularly, low in saturated fat.
- ✓ Eat plenty of breads, cereals (preferably wholegrain), vegetables (including legumes) and fruits
- ✓ Eat only a moderate amount of sugars and foods containing added sugar
- ✓ Choose low salt foods and use salt sparingly when cooking
- ✓ Maintain a healthy body weight by balancing physical activity and food intake
- ✓ If you drink alcohol, limit your intake.



### **What to eat to avoid or manage Diabetes**

#### **Type 2**

##### **Breakfast** – choose from...

- Low GI Breakfast cereal with low fat milk (in winter try porridge or in summer muesli)
- Fruit
- Bread or toast – preferably wholegrain, wholemeal or high fibre white – thinly spread margarine, peanut butter, jam or vegemite or try with baked beans, grilled tomato or sardines
- Tea or coffee (with low fat milk)

##### **Lunch** – choose from...

- Soup (preferably containing vegetables and beans, chickpeas or lentils)
- Sandwich made with bread, roll, crackers or crispbread – preferable wholegrain or wholemeal – with thinly spread margarine or avocado, lean meat or tuna and salad.
- Salad or vegetables

- A small serve of lean meat, skinless poultry, seafood, egg, fat reduced cheese or a more generous serve of legumes (such as beans or lentils).
- Fruit
- Tea or Coffee (with low fat milk)

### Dinner

- Starchy vegetables (potato, sweet potato, pumpkin), pasta, rice.
- Other vegetables
- A small serve of lean meat, skinless poultry, seafood, egg, fat reduced cheese or a more generous serve of legumes (such as beans or lentils).
- Bread roll, crackers or crispbread – preferably wholegrain or wholemeal – with thinly spread margarine or avocado
- Fruit or yoghurt or ice-cream
- Tea or Coffee (with low fat milk)

### What happens if you don't treat diabetes properly?

The most common complications of diabetes are caused by damage to the large blood vessels of the heart, brain and legs, and damage to the small blood vessels of the eyes, kidneys, feet and nerves. This damage can lead to strokes, serious heart disease, lack of circulation to legs and feet leading to amputation, kidney disease, and blindness. It is really important for people who are at risk or who have diabetes to get regular check ups for eyes, blood pressure and blood sugar and kidney damage as well as practicing good foot care.

For more information, resources and events go to the *Diabetes WA* website:

<http://diabeteswa.com.au>



For more information on this subject or any other **women's health** or **mental health issue** please contact us on (08) 9227 8122, or toll free on 1800 998 399

For information on issues specific to **Indigenous health** or for **drug and alcohol** related issues please contact us on (08) 9227 9032, or toll free on 1800 246 655