

Being proactive is the best approach.



Type 2 Diabetes 101

The majority of people with diabetes – almost 90 percent of all sufferers – have Type 2, or adult onset diabetes. When you have Type 2 diabetes, your body produces insulin but is resistant to its effects either because you don't produce enough or your body can't recognize it and so doesn't use it properly. If left undiagnosed, diabetes can cause a whole host of health problems and can even be fatal.

Fortunately, unlike its Type 1 cousin, Type 2 diabetes can often be prevented or delayed. The tips below can help you avoid the onset of Type 2 diabetes, or, if you've already been diagnosed with the disease, better manage it to avoid many of its complications.

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

It's not surprising that Type 2 diabetes is expected to rise in the years to come, due mainly to a few common trends including: an aging population and an increase in the number of people who are overweight or obese. But with a few simple lifestyle changes, you can cut your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes in half, or at least delay its onset if you're predisposed to the disease. Make an effort to:

Stick to a healthy meal plan. Though there's lots of information on healthy eating out there, many people choose to remain in the dark about it or ignore their better judgement. You may end up eating when you're not hungry or don't plan ahead and end up grabbing high-fat and/or sugary snacks that offer little nutritional value and a short-term hunger fix.

Planning ahead and eating regular balanced meals and snacks throughout the day that include a good mix of whole grains, fresh produce, lean proteins and lower fat dairy foods will not only help you keep your waistline trim, but will also keep your blood sugar on a healthier, more even keel.

30 minutes of activity, five to seven days a week can help you keep your weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol—all risk factors for Type 2 diabetes when not well-managed—in check.



Type 2 Diabetes and Children

Type 2 diabetes was once known as "adult onset diabetes" because it often developed later in life. But the increasingly activity-poor and calorie-rich lifestyles of many kids have sent childhood obesity rates soaring and child-onset Type 2 diabetes up with them.

While the idea of Type 2 management and prevention for kids is quite new, the tactics are the same. First and foremost, if you're concerned about your child's weight, talk to your family doctor. He or she can provide tips on healthy eating and suggestions for infusing more physical activity into your child's day.

If your child is diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, avoid over-reacting (and raising your child's fears), *stay positive* and focus on working together to get the diabetes under control. Since you can't always be around to monitor your child, make sure he/she is educated and involved in the management of the condition. Show your child how to make healthy food choices, exercise, test blood sugar and encourage him or her to ask the medical support team questions at appointments.

The good news is, with a concerted effort, some lifestyle changes and help from your doctor, Type 2 diabetes is manageable.

These strategies are a great way to manage Type 2 diabetes.



Managing Type 2 Diabetes

You've received the bad news: you have Type 2 diabetes. It may be tough to digest, especially when you hear about the potential complications. The bad news is that ignoring or minimizing the condition can lead to serious health problems such as heart disease, blindness, nerve damage, thyroid and kidney problems amongst other complications.

The good news is, with a concerted effort, some lifestyle changes and help from your doctor, Type 2 diabetes is manageable. Aside from following the steps already mentioned, there are some other ways to keep your diabetes under control and continue to live an active and independent life.

Learn to manage stress. Stress can be all-consuming so prolonged periods where your stress levels are running high may prevent you from focusing on your normal diabetes management steps. When proper eating, exercising and sleeping patterns go out the window, most people will get sick. But for someone with Type 2 diabetes this can cause more serious health problems.

Check blood sugar levels regularly to ensure you are in your target range. This will lower your risk of complications and help you remain healthy. In fact, controlling your blood sugar can reduce your risk of having a diabetes-related heart attack or stroke by over 50 percent.

Take prescribed diabetes medication. Though not everyone needs medication to manage the condition, if your doctor has prescribed it, it's for good reason.

Take care of your feet. Proper foot care is very important as foot problems—such as nerve damage and circulation issues—are common in those with diabetes and can lead to serious complications. Make sure you check your feet daily and visit your doctor if you notice anything unusual.

Avoid alcohol. Aside from the fact that too much alcohol can damage your liver and your judgement, it can also affect your body weight and may raise or lower your blood sugar to dangerous levels.

Visit your doctor, dentist and optometrist regularly to check for any complications caused by diabetes. If blood sugar levels are off, they can cause problems in the mouth and teeth that need to be treated by a dentist. Also, diabetes can cause sight problems if not managed properly, so regular visits to the optometrist are necessary.

Know the risk factors, signs and symptoms of Type 2 diabetes and always bring up any noticeable physical changes at doctor's appointments: they could be a sign of something more serious. While certain risk factors are unavoidable—such as family history of diabetes and being over the age of 40—staying informed and making small lifestyle changes can go a long way to keeping Type 2 diabetes at bay.

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

Get moving. Getting more active could be as simple as leaving your car at home and moving more. Try walking, biking or rollerblading to work or to run errands. *Live too far?* Pack in a few extra strides by getting off the bus a few stops early and walking the rest of the way or purposely parking at the furthest end of the parking lot. Take the stairs, join the gym, dance around your house; whatever it takes to squeeze some physical activity into your day

Butt out. You already know that smoking is bad for you. But did you know that people who smoke a pack of cigarettes or more a day are 94 per cent more likely to develop diabetes than non-smokers? It's just another reason to quit smoking now!

Watch your weight. By following the above two steps you will be well on your way to maintaining a healthy body weight. If you're not sure where you're body mass index (BMI) is at—most physicians agree below 27 on the scale is best—make an appointment with your doctor to get an assessment. The more weight you carry the more resistant your body becomes to insulin and the more likely you are to develop Type 2 diabetes. So if you are overweight, talk to your doctor about how to safely start a program to drop the extra pounds and become a lean, mean, diabetes fighting machine!