



**SIZWE**

MEDICAL FUND

Your health in caring hands

**DIABETES**

What you need  
to know

**BECAUSE....CARING  
COMES NATURALLY TO US**

## Why should Diabetes be treated ?

Long-term complications of diabetes include heart disease, nerve damage, kidney damage, eye damage, foot complications, skin conditions, impaired hearing and a big risk of contracting Alzheimer's Disease. All these factors show that untreated diabetes could result in far greater illness.

## How is Diabetes treated ?

Prediabetes requires regular monitoring of your blood glucose, in order to keep it in check. Recommended lifestyle adjustments in terms of weight loss, healthy diet and exercise.

### If you have Type 1 diabetes,

insulin injections will form a daily part of your treatment. Additional treatment would include regularly monitoring of your blood sugar, lifestyle adjustments and possibly oral medications.



### If you have Type 2 diabetes,

oral medications would be used in conjunction with regular blood glucose monitoring and lifestyle adjustments.

# DIABETES MELLITUS –

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## What is Diabetes Mellitus ?

This is a group of diseases that influences how your body uses glucose. It is also referred to as diabetes and sugar diabetes.

## What is Glucose ?

Also known as blood sugar, glucose is an important source of energy for those cells that make up your muscles and tissues. It is your brain's main source of fuel and is vital to your health.

## What is the connection between Glucose and Diabetes ?

Diabetes develops when you have too much glucose in your blood. Your body's glucose levels are regulated by a hormone called insulin. Insulin is produced by a gland in your body, known as the pancreas. Diabetes develops either when the pancreas cannot supply enough insulin, or when the insulin doesn't work properly. This could have serious effects on your health.

## How is Diabetes diagnosed ?

A blood test is used to check your blood glucose levels. This blood test is either after fasting or after an oral dose of glucose. The oral glucose test is used to show the doctor how your body processes glucose. Urine tests may also be used to help diagnose diabetes.

## Are there different type of Diabetes ?

Yes, there is prediabetes, Type 1 diabetes and Type 2 diabetes.

## What is Prediabetes ?

This is when your blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not yet as high as when you are diagnosed with diabetes.

## What is Type 1 Diabetes ?

This type of diabetes is also referred to as juvenile diabetes, because it is commonly diagnosed in childhood. (It may however develop at any age). The pancreas produces no insulin therefore leaving the body unable to regulate it's blood sugar levels. People with Type 1 diabetes have to have daily insulin injections to manage their condition.

## What is Type 2 Diabetes ?

Type 2 Diabetes is also called adult onset diabetes. In this type of diabetes, not enough insulin is being produced by the pancreas. Another situation may occur where insulin is still produced by the pancreas, but the body's cells become resistant to it, resulting in the insulin not being used efficiently.

## What are the symptoms of Diabetes ?

While some people don't experience obvious symptoms of the disease, the following symptoms are common:

# Symptoms

- + You're often very thirsty
- + You're frequently hungry
- + You're always tired and irritable
- + You urinate often
- + You have unexplained weight loss
- + You are constantly itching
- + Blurry vision
- + Cuts and bruises take long to heal
- + You have frequent infections, e.g. gum or skin infections
- + Numbness in your hands and feet

## Are certain people more at risk of getting Diabetes ?

Diabetes affects people of all races, ages and nationalities. While the reason for Type 1 diabetes seems to be a combination of genetic predisposition and environmental factors, this is not known for sure.

*The development of prediabetes and Type 2 diabetes appears to be increased by the following factors:*

## At risk

- + Overweight
- + Lack of exercise
- + Age: the risk increases as you get older
- + Family history & ethnicity
- + High blood pressure
- + Abnormal cholesterol levels

# Are there any lifestyle changes I could make, to help or prevent Diabetes ?

**Yes** lifestyle changes may enhance your quality of life as a diabetic



**Eat healthily**



**Engage in regular physical activity**



**Lose excess weight**

References: <http://patient.info/doctor/diabetes-mellitus>;  
<http://www.diabetes.co.uk/diabetes-mellitus.html>; <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/diabetesmellitus.html>;  
<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/basics/definition/con-20033091>;  
<http://www.kznhealth.gov.za/diabetes1.htm>

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