

Type 1 Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition in which the level of sugar (glucose) in your blood is too high. People with type 1 diabetes don't make insulin, the hormone which helps process the sugar in your body.

Your body uses sugar for energy—for activities like walking, playing, and working, but also for breathing and digesting—and all the other functions your body performs. Your blood always has some sugar in it; your body makes glucose, and you also get it from food. But *too much* sugar in the blood isn't good for your health.

Insulin is a hormone that helps your body regulate your blood sugar. When you have type 1 diabetes, your body does not make insulin (or makes a very small amount). As a result, sugar builds up in the blood instead of going into the cells. If your blood sugar level remains high, over time, it can cause serious damage to your heart, eyes, kidneys, and feet. Because you have type 1 diabetes, you must take insulin to control the amount of sugar in your blood. If you stop taking insulin or skip it, you can become very sick very quickly.

Type 1 diabetes usually happens in children and young adults, but can develop at any age. It used to be called "juvenile diabetes." Five percent (5%) of all people with diabetes have type 1.

How do you get type 1 diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes is caused when the body's defense system (your immune system) destroys the cells in the pancreas that make insulin.

What are symptoms of uncontrolled type 1 diabetes?

- Thirst
- Hunger
- Increased urination (the amount of urine you pass and how often)
- Feeling tired
- Sudden weight loss
- Blurry vision
- Nausea, stomach pain

How is type 1 diabetes treated?

The main treatment for type 1 diabetes is controlling blood sugar by taking insulin. Insulin can be taken by injection or pump. You'll need to check your blood sugar regularly to be sure it's in the proper range. Controlling blood sugar helps improve overall health and well-being, and it prevents long-term complications.

Other ways to control your diabetes and lower your risk of complications:

- Eat healthy—stop drinking juice, soda, or other sugary beverages; eat smaller meals; eat more fruits and vegetables.

- Be physically active—walking more is a great start.
- If you smoke, stop!
- Visit your health care provider for routine diabetes care
- Learn all you can about diabetes

Patient Care Advice (PCOI) documents are available under **Resources** on your Patient Gateway home page.

This document is not a substitute for your care team's medical advice and should not be relied upon for treatment for specific medical conditions.

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