



Diabetes: Differences Between Type 1 and 2

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Overview

There are many differences between type 1 and type 2 diabetes. But in both types of diabetes, blood sugar levels get too high. This increases the risk for complications, such as blindness and kidney failure. For both diseases, treatment focuses on keeping blood sugar levels within a target range to help prevent long-term complications.

Differences between type 1 and type 2 diabetes

	Type 1 diabetes	Type 2 diabetes
What occurs:	The body's immune system destroys the cells in the pancreas that make insulin. In time, the pancreas stops making insulin. Without insulin, cells can't absorb sugar (glucose), which they need to produce energy.	The body isn't able to use insulin the right way. This is called insulin resistance. As type 2 diabetes gets worse, the pancreas may make less and less insulin. This is called insulin deficiency.
Age when it starts:	Symptoms usually start in childhood or young adulthood.	It can develop at any age. It's usually discovered in adulthood. But the number of children with type 2 diabetes is rising.
Symptoms:	People often seek medical help because they are seriously ill from sudden symptoms of high blood sugar.	People may not have symptoms before diagnosis.
Low blood sugar episodes:	Episodes of low blood sugar level (hypoglycemia) are common.	There are no episodes of low blood sugar level, unless the person is taking insulin or certain diabetes medicines.
How common:	Type 1 accounts for 5 to 10 out of 100 people who have diabetes.	Type 2 accounts for the vast majority of people who have diabetes—90 to 95 out of 100 people.
Prevention:	It can't be prevented.	It can be prevented or delayed with a healthy lifestyle. This includes staying at a healthy weight, eating sensibly, and exercising regularly.

Related Information

- Type 1 Diabetes
- Type 2 Diabetes

Credits

Current as of: April 30, 2024

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