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# What is Diabetes?

## Diabetes affects more than just your blood sugar levels.

Simply put, diabetes is a chronic (ongoing, long-term) disease in which the body cannot make or properly use insulin. But there's a lot more to diabetes: it can affect many different parts of your body negatively – including your heart. There is good news though - there are simple steps you can take to help make sure your diabetes is managed and you stay healthy.

- What is Diabetes



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## Diabetes Basics: The Main Players



**Glucose** is a simple sugar that serves as a source of energy so that our bodies can function. Sugars found in the food we eat are broken down to glucose by our bodies which then enters our blood where it can be used by the body as fuel to provide energy. Too much glucose however, can be a problem. That's where insulin helps.



**Insulin** is a hormone that helps to control the amount of glucose in the blood. Insulin allows your body's cells to use the sugar as energy or store it as fat. When the glucose is used this way, your body's glucose levels (blood sugar levels) go back down to where they should be.



Insulin is made by the **pancreas**, which is an organ just behind your stomach.

### **In type 2 diabetes, your body:**

- Can't properly use the insulin that's being released by your pancreas

OR:

- Can't make enough insulin to help keep your glucose levels down

This causes high blood sugar levels ([hyperglycemia](#)), which can lead to all sorts of health problems for you.

### **Diabetes and Beyond: Complications to Know About**

Having high blood sugar can affect other parts of your body. People with diabetes can experience:

- Chronic kidney disease
- Foot problems, non-traumatic lower limb (leg, foot, toe, etc.) amputation
- Eye disease (retinopathy) that can lead to blindness
- Heart problems, such as heart disease which can lead to heart attack and heart failure
- Stroke
- Anxiety
- Nerve damage
- Erectile dysfunction (men)

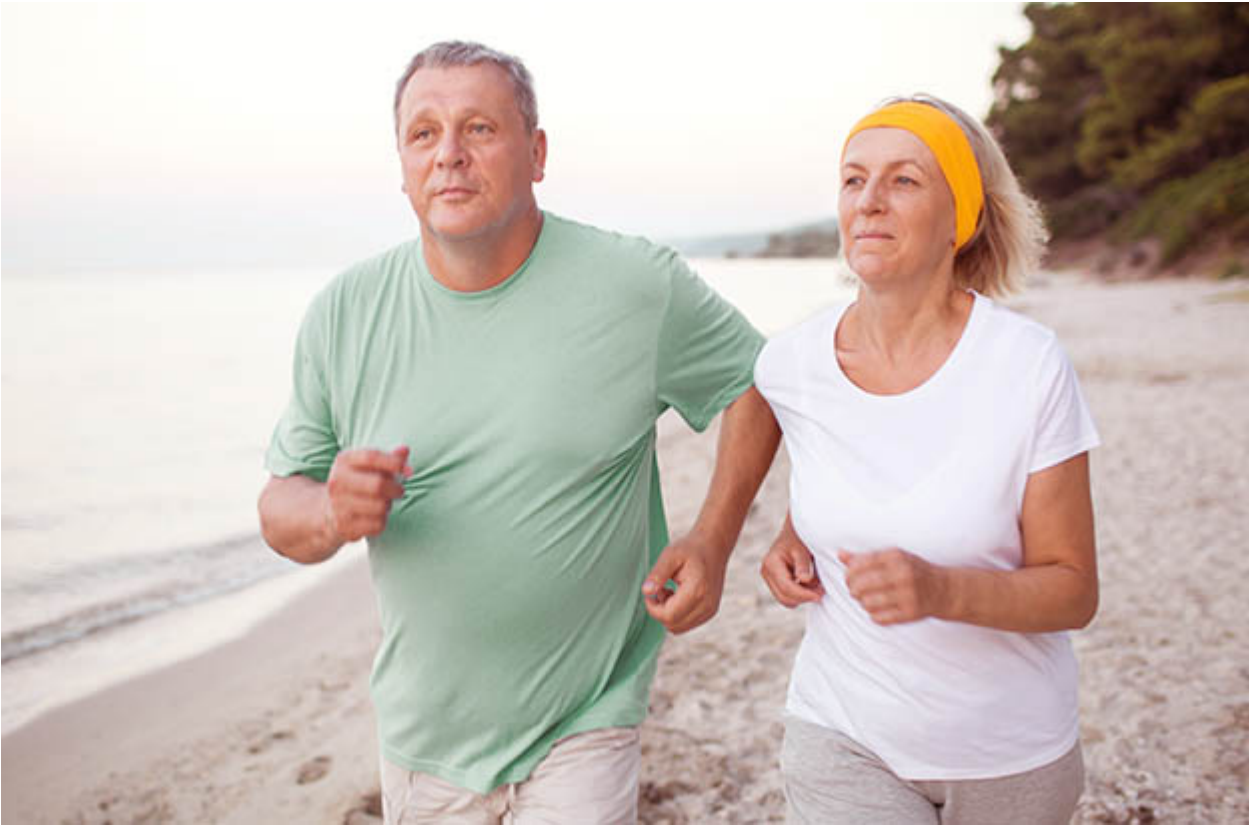
Both type 1 diabetes and type 2 diabetes can have a negative impact on other aspects of your health; [particularly your heart.](#)



## **Type 1 vs. Type 2 Diabetes: What's the Difference?**

Find out the differences between each type, who is at risk and what you can do if you've been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

[Learn more about diabetes](#)



## Making Good Choices

There are things you can do right away to help manage your risk when it comes to type 2 diabetes.

### REDUCE YOUR RISK



## Managing Blood Sugar Levels

For people with diabetes, managing blood sugar levels can be tricky. Learn how to take care of your blood sugar levels when they are too low or too high.

[LEARN ABOUT BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS](#)



## Type 2 Diabetes and Other Health Problems

Diabetes can lead to other health issues, especially when it comes to your heart.

[SEE RELATED DISEASES](#)

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