

Nutrition Nugget

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Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 Diabetes is also known as adult-onset or noninsulin dependent diabetes (NIDD). It is a chronic condition that affects the way your body metabolizes glucose (sugar). Glucose is your body's main source of fuel. Insulin is a hormone that regulates the movement of sugar into the cells. In a patient with type 2 diabetes, the body will either resist insulin or it doesn't produce enough to maintain a stable glucose level. If left untreated, type 2 diabetes can be life threatening! The symptoms of type 2 diabetes may develop very slowly and include:

- Increased thirst and frequent urination
- Increased hunger
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Slow-healing sores or frequent infections
- Areas of darkened skin

The onset of Type 2 Diabetes occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin or when the pancreas stops producing enough insulin. The exact cause of this is unknown, but excess weight and inactivity seem to contribute.

There are several risk factors for developing Type 2 Diabetes. Researchers don't know exactly why it occurs in some people and not others. The risk factors include being overweight, excess abdominal fat, inactivity, family history, race (African Americans, Hispanics, American Indian, and Asian-Americans), age (45 and older), pre-diabetes, or gestational diabetes.

There are several complications involved with Type 2 Diabetes: heart and blood vessel disease, nerve damage, kidney damage, eye damage, foot damage, skin and mouth conditions, osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease, and hearing problems.

There is no such thing as a "diabetes diet", but there are foods that you can eat that are high in nutrition and low in fat and calories such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Counting carbohydrates is an important component to include in food planning and using the glycemic index is also helpful. Getting plenty of physical activity is important (get your doctor's approval before starting an exercise program) because exercising can help lower blood sugar.

Prevention is key when trying to avoid type 2 diabetes. Even if you have a family history, diet and exercise can help prevent the disease. The three lifestyle changes to remember are:

- Eat healthy foods - be sure to choose foods low in fat and calories (for every 1,000 calories consumed be sure to include 14 grams of fiber because fiber helps lower blood sugar levels).
- Get Physical - 30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day is recommended.
- Lose Excess Pounds - losing 5-10% of your body weight can reduce the risk of diabetes. The key is focusing on permanent lifestyle changes to keep your weight under control. Other benefits to losing excess weight include a healthier heart, more energy, and improved self-confidence/esteem.

Remember that your health is under your hands. Take control of it today!!

Source:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/type-2-diabetes/DS00585/METHOD=print>

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