



Know who to turn to

# About Diabetes

and the  
Canadian Diabetes Association



*Research:* The exact cause of diabetes is not yet known, although scientific advances show more and more promise every day. The Canadian Diabetes Association is a leader in all areas of research and contributes funding to many diverse and innovative projects across the country. The findings from some of these initiatives have had a significant impact on improving the quality of life of those living with diabetes and moving us toward the ultimate goal - a cure for diabetes.

*Education:* Diabetes requires a great deal of self-management and discipline. People with diabetes need to actively regulate not only their eating habits and medication, but also their exercise regimen, stress levels and illness. Through its network of members, volunteers, health care professionals, partners and employees from coast to coast, the Canadian Diabetes Association helps Canadians with diabetes obtain the information they need to make informed choices in their daily lives.

The Canadian Diabetes Association is also Canada's leading provider of information to physicians and health care professionals and has developed internationally recognized clinical practice guidelines for dealing with the disease.

*Service:* People with diabetes, especially when they are first diagnosed, often need help and support to adjust to the new reality of their lives. The Canadian Diabetes Association reaches out to all people living with diabetes, their loved ones and their teachers and care givers, to provide support and advice.

*Advocacy:* People with diabetes can face discrimination. The Canadian Diabetes Association believes that everyone should be treated fairly. That means the needs of people with diabetes need to be considered individually, not as a collective whole. To achieve this, the Canadian Diabetes Association works with key decision-makers at all levels of government and with the private sector.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that has no cure. It is a leading cause of death by disease in Canada. More than 55,000 Manitobans have been diagnosed with diabetes. Many thousands more have it, and don't know it.

Diabetes and its complications cost the Manitoba health care system more than \$500,000 a day, and an estimated \$9 billion every year across Canada. Preventing diabetes is everyone's business.



## Know who to turn to

## Canadian Diabetes Association

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Canadians have our commitment that we will continue to be an ally. The Canadian Diabetes Association – Know who to turn to.

For more information, call the Canadian Diabetes Association at (204) 925-3800, or toll free in Manitoba: 1-800-BANTING (1-800-226-8464). You can also e-mail us: [mbinfo@diabetes.ca](mailto:mbinfo@diabetes.ca), or visit our website at [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca).

The Canadian Diabetes Association is a charitable organization that was established almost 50 years ago, and has grown to include more than 150 locations across the country. The Canadian Diabetes Association plays a leading role in supporting the over two million Canadians who are directly affected by diabetes, and their loved ones, through research, education, service and advocacy.



## Types of diabetes

There are three types of diabetes:

**Type 1 diabetes** occurs when the pancreas no longer produces any or very little insulin. The body needs insulin to use sugar for energy. Approximately 10 per cent of people with diabetes have type 1 diabetes.

**Type 2 diabetes** occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body does not use the insulin that is produced effectively. Ninety per cent of people with diabetes have type 2.

**Gestational diabetes** is a temporary condition that occurs during pregnancy. It affects two to four per cent of all pregnancies with an increased risk of developing diabetes for both mother and child.

### Is diabetes serious?

Diabetes is a leading cause of death by disease. If it is left untreated or improperly managed, the high levels of blood sugar associated with diabetes can slowly damage both the small and large blood vessels in the body, resulting in a variety of complications:

- Heart disease is two to four times more common in people with diabetes than without.
- Diabetes is a leading cause of adult blindness and kidney disease.
- Worldwide, half or more of all non-traumatic limb amputations are due to diabetes.

- Diabetes is a major cause of erectile dysfunction.

With careful management, these complications can be delayed and even prevented. The first step in preventing the onset of these complications is recognizing the symptoms that may indicate you have diabetes.

### What are the symptoms?

Signs and symptoms of diabetes can include the following:

- unusual thirst,
- frequent urination,
- unusual weight loss,
- extreme fatigue or lack of energy,
- blurred vision,
- frequent or recurring infections,
- cuts and bruises that are slow to heal, and
- tingling or numbness in hands or feet.

It is also important to recognize that many people who have type 2 diabetes may display no symptoms. That's why asking your physician to screen you for diabetes is so important, particularly if you have any of the risk factors for diabetes.

### What are the risk factors?

Risk factors for developing diabetes include the following:

- being age 45 or over,
- being overweight (especially if you carry most of your weight around your middle),
- being a member of a high-risk group (Aboriginal peoples, Hispanic, Asian or African descent),

- having a parent, brother or sister with diabetes,
- having given birth to a baby that weighed over 4 kg (9 lbs) at birth, or have had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy),
- having high cholesterol or other fats in the blood,
- having higher-than-normal blood glucose levels, and
- having high blood pressure or heart disease.

### How is diabetes managed?

Today, more than ever before, people with diabetes can expect to live active, independent and vital lives if they make a lifelong commitment to careful management of the disease. Diabetes is managed in the following ways:

*Education:* Diabetes education is an important first step. All people with diabetes need to learn about their condition in order to make healthy lifestyle choices and manage their diabetes.

*Meal Planning:* What, when and how much you eat play an important role in regulating how well your body manages blood sugar levels.

*Exercise:* Regular exercise helps your body lower blood sugars, promotes weight loss, reduces stress and enhances overall fitness.

*Healthy Weight:* Maintaining a healthy weight is especially important in the control of type 2 diabetes.

*Medication:* Type 1 diabetes always requires daily injections of insulin. Type 2 diabetes is controlled through exercise and meal planning and may require medications and/or insulin to assist the body in making or using insulin more effectively.

*Lifestyle Management:* Quitting smoking and learning to reduce stress levels in day-to-day life can help people with diabetes better manage their disease.

### How do you know if you have diabetes?

Early diagnosis of diabetes is extremely important. The earlier it is diagnosed, the sooner steps can be taken to manage the disease and prevent or delay complications. The Canadian Diabetes Association's *Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Diabetes in Canada* recommends routine screening every three years for everyone over age 45 and more frequent and/or earlier screening for individuals with other risk factors.

### Can you prevent diabetes?

Lifestyle choices and behaviours impact the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. This means that your lifestyle is one area you can focus on to help prevent or delay the onset of the disease. A healthy diet, weight control, exercise, reduction in stress and smoking cessation are important prevention steps.

### Where does the Canadian Diabetes Association fit in?

When Canadians want an ally in the fight against diabetes, they turn to the Canadian Diabetes Association. The Association plays a leading role in supporting the over two million Canadians who are directly affected by diabetes, and their loved ones, through research, education, service and advocacy.