



Type I Diabetes

What is Type I Diabetes?

Type I Diabetes (sometimes called “Type I Diabetes Mellitus”) is a disorder that disrupts the way your body uses sugar.

All the cells in your body need sugar to work normally. Sugar gets into cells with the help of a hormone called insulin. If there is not enough insulin, or if the body stops responding to insulin, sugar builds up in the bloodstream. That is what happens to people with diabetes.

There are two types of diabetes. People with Type I Diabetes make little or no insulin. People with Type II Diabetes sometimes also make too little insulin, but often the problem is that their cells do not respond to insulin.

What are the symptoms of Type I Diabetes?

- Intense thirst
- Being very tired/fatigued
- Urinating often
- Losing weight
- Blurred vision
- Nausea/vomiting/belly pain (*in extreme cases*)

How do I know if I have Type I Diabetes?

Your doctor can perform a blood test to measure the amount of sugar in your blood. The test will show whether you have diabetes. If you do, your doctor can decide whether it is Type I or Type II Diabetes based on your age, weight, and other factors.

Why is it important I keep my blood pressure and cholesterol low?

People with diabetes have a much higher risk of heart disease and stroke than people who don't have diabetes. Keeping blood pressure and cholesterol low can help lower those risks.

If your doctor puts you on blood pressure or cholesterol medications, be sure to take them. Studies show that medicines can prevent heart attacks, strokes, and even death.

How is Type I Diabetes treated?

Treatment for treating Type I Diabetes involves two key parts:

- Measuring your blood sugar often, to make sure it does not get too high or too low. Your doctor will explain how to measure your blood sugar and how often to do it. You can keep track of your blood sugar using a phone app, online “portal” or paper chart.
- Using insulin shots or an insulin pump to keep your blood sugar levels in the right range. (*An insulin pump is a device you wear close to your body. It is connected to a tube that goes under your skin and supplies insulin*)

People with Type I Diabetes also need to carefully plan their meals and activity levels. That's because eating raises blood sugar, while being active lowers it. Despite the need to plan, people with diabetes can have normal diets, be active, eat out, and do all the things that most other people do.

There are other things you can do to stay healthy, such as not smoking. It's also important to get the flu vaccine each year. Some people also need a vaccine to prevent pneumonia.

Why is it important to keep my blood sugar close to normal?

Having high blood sugar can cause serious problems over time and can lead to:

- Nerve damage
- Kidney disease
- Vision problems (*or even blindness*)
- Pain or loss of feeling in the hands and feet
- Possible amputation (*fingers, toes, or other body parts removed surgically*)
- Heart disease or strokes

Having low blood sugar can cause problems too. It can make your heart beat fast, and make you sweat and shake. If blood sugar gets too low it can cause headaches, drowsiness, seizures and loss of consciousness.

How often do I need to see my doctor?

When first diagnosed, you will have frequent visits and then once “controlled”, you will probably need to see your doctor at least 3 or 4 times per year.

During your visits, your doctor will measure your blood sugar using a test called “A1C”. This test tells your average blood sugar level over the last few months. The results will help your doctor decide whether to adjust your treatment. They may also measure your blood pressure and cholesterol. It is very important that you keep all of your appointments with your doctor.