

Fact Sheet



Division of Developmental Disabilities Health Care Services

Type 1 Diabetes

Health Information Fact Sheet

Type 1 Diabetes is thought to be caused by an autoimmune reaction. This causes the body to attack itself by mistake. It destroys the cells in the pancreas that make insulin. This process can go on for months or years before any symptoms appear. Your pancreas does not make insulin or makes very little insulin if you have type 1 diabetes. Insulin helps blood sugar enter the cells in your body to use as energy. Without insulin, blood sugar can't get into cells and builds up in the bloodstream. High blood sugar is damaging to the body. It causes many symptoms and complications of diabetes. Diet and lifestyle habits do not cause type 1 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes often develops in children, teens, and young adults, but it can happen at any age.

Fact Sheet guidelines have been provided as general information, not as a substitution for medical treatment from a physician.

Some Facts:

Currently, no one knows how to prevent type 1 diabetes. It can be managed by:

- Following your doctor's recommendations for living a healthy lifestyle.
- Managing your blood sugar.
- Getting regular health checkups.
- Getting diabetes self-management education and support.

Risk Factors:

- *Family history:* Having a parent, brother, or sister with type 1 diabetes.
- *Age:* You can get type 1 diabetes at any age, but it usually develops in children, teens, or young adults.

Signs & Symptoms

It can take months or years before symptoms are noticed. Type 1 diabetes symptoms can develop in just a few weeks or months. Once symptoms appear, they can be severe. Symptoms include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pains
- Urinating (pee) a lot, often at night
- Excessive thirst or feeling extremely thirsty all the time
- Weight loss without taking steps to decrease caloric intake to try to lose weight
- Excess hunger or feeling extremely hungry all the time
- Blurry vision
- Numb or tingling hands or feet
- Feeling very tired
- Having very dry skin
- Body sores that heal slowly
- Increase in infections

Diabetes-Related Complications:

Hypoglycemia and diabetic ketoacidosis are common complications of diabetes. It is important to know how to handle both. Meet with your doctor to learn about the signs and symptoms and get advice on how to treat them.

Type 1 Diabetes



Treatment

Attend routine appointments with your health care team which may include:

- Primary care doctor
- Foot doctor
- Dentist
- Eye doctor
- Registered dietitian nutritionist
- Diabetes educator
- Pharmacist

Follow Your Doctor's Orders

You will need to take insulin shots or wear an insulin pump every day. Insulin is needed to manage your blood sugar levels and give your body energy. Your doctor will work with you to figure out the best type for you and insulin dosage.

You will need to do regular blood sugar checks. Ask your doctor how often you should check it and what your target blood sugar levels should be. Keeping your blood sugar levels as close to target as possible will help you prevent or delay diabetes-related complications.

What You Can Do to Manage Type 1 Diabetes

- Manage stress
- Make healthy food choices
- Be physically active
- Manage your blood pressure
- Manage your cholesterol
- Attend routine appointments with your health care team
- Follow your doctor's orders