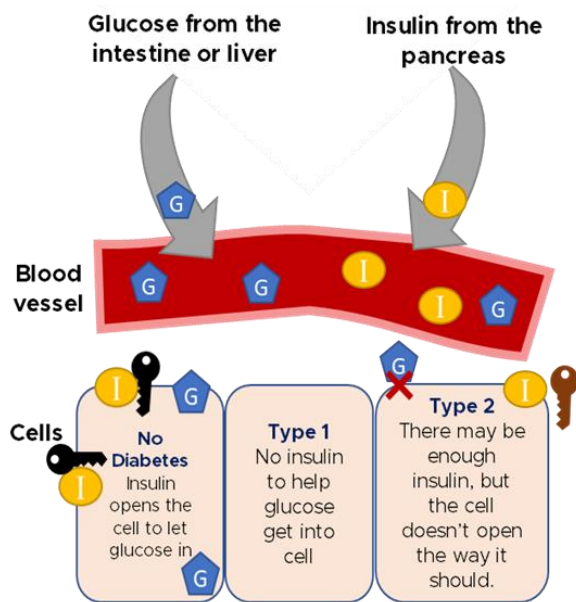


## Type 2 Diabetes

The body uses sugar (glucose) for energy. When you have type 2 diabetes, your body cannot store or use sugar like it should. You may have enough insulin, but it does not work as it should to open cell walls for glucose to enter. This is called insulin resistance. Sugar then builds up in the bloodstream where it can cause serious health problems.



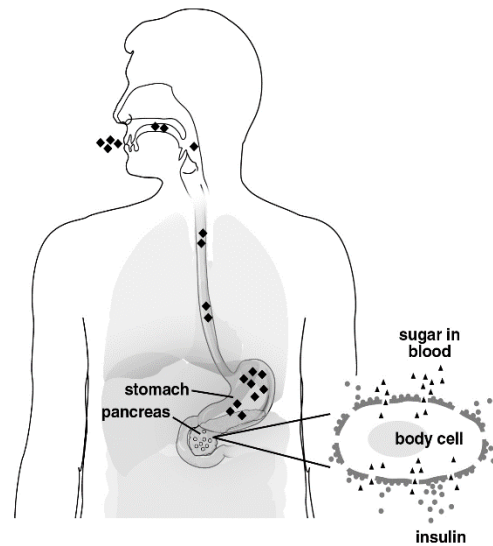
### Your Pancreas and Liver

Your pancreas makes insulin. When blood sugar levels rise, the body releases insulin to keep blood sugar levels normal. Over time, the body may stop making enough insulin to keep glucose levels in a normal range. When this happens, insulin is needed.

The liver is also important. One of the main jobs of the liver is to make sugar. In type 2 diabetes, the liver makes too much sugar, especially at night.

### Food and Insulin

When you eat, the stomach breaks down food into sugar. Sugar enters the bloodstream and travels to all the cells in your body. The rise in blood sugar after a meal causes the pancreas to release insulin. Insulin works as a key to unlock the doors (also called receptors) into the cells. Once the sugar is inside the cells, it can be used for energy.



### Symptoms of High Blood Sugar

You may not have any symptoms. The symptoms of type 2 diabetes come on slowly, over months and even years.

Symptoms could include:

- Frequent urination
- Feeling tired
- Thirst
- Dry or itchy skin
- Frequent infections
- Slow healing
- Numbness or tingling in toes or fingers
- Blurred vision

## **Diagnosis**

- A1C test result of 6.5% or higher
- Fasting blood glucose of 126 mg/dL or higher (“fasting” means nothing to eat for at least 8 hours before the test.)
- Symptoms of diabetes and blood glucose of 200 mg/dL or higher

## **Risk Factors**

- Over age 35
- Family history of diabetes
- Family history
- Ethnicity (African American, Latino, Native American, Asian American and Pacific Islander)
- Overweight
- Diabetes during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)
- Sedentary lifestyle

## **Reasons to Keep Blood Sugars in a Healthy Range**

High blood sugar levels can damage nerves, blood vessels, and organs in the body without you knowing. High blood sugar can lead to heart attacks and strokes, kidney disease, eye damage, sexual dysfunction, nerve damage, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, gum disease and other problems in your mouth. Keeping your blood sugars, blood pressure and cholesterol levels in a healthy range will help to prevent damage.

## **Treatment**

While there is no cure for diabetes, it can be managed through healthy eating, physical activity, blood sugar monitoring, and medicines. Knowing about diabetes and making a plan to manage your diabetes will help you stay healthy.

## **Build Your Team**

You are the most important person on the team. Your doctor, nurse educator and dietitian will help you learn about taking care of yourself. A dentist, eye doctor, doctor, counselor, and someone to help you with an exercise plan are also good team members. Don't forget to include family members and friends who can support you.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 5/2022 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5603