

Type 2 Diabetes: Am I at Risk?

What is type 2 diabetes?

The most common kind of diabetes is type 2. This means it's hard for your body to turn the food you eat into energy.

After you eat, your body releases a hormone (insulin) that causes blood sugar to enter the cells where it's used for energy. When your cells don't use insulin well or you don't make enough insulin, sugar builds up in your blood. This causes diabetes.

Over time, high blood sugar can damage your nerves and blood vessels, which can lead to:

- Heart attack
- Stroke
- Kidney disease
- Eye disease
- Other health problems

Prediabetes means your blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but aren't as high as diabetes.

Blood sugar levels		
	Fasting glucose (mg/dL)	A1C (%)
Normal	Less than 100	Less than 5.7
Prediabetes	100–125	5.7–6.4
Diabetes	126 or higher	6.5 or higher

What can put me at risk?

You're at risk for developing type 2 diabetes if you:

- Are Native American, Latino, African American, Asian American, or Pacific Islander.

- Have a brother, sister, or parent with diabetes.
- Had a baby weighing more than 9 pounds, or you had gestational diabetes (high blood sugar during pregnancy).
- Are overweight. This means you have a body mass index, or BMI, over 25.
- Have high blood pressure (140/90 mm/Hg or higher), low HDL ("good") cholesterol (35 mg/dL or less), or high triglycerides (higher than 250 mg/dL).
- Have prediabetes.
- Have polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS).
- Exercise less than 3 times a week.

What are the symptoms of diabetes?

People who develop diabetes may have one or more of these symptoms:

- Fatigue (unusually tired)
- Excessive thirst and hunger
- Frequent urination (from urinary tract infections)
- Weight loss
- Blurred vision
- Numbness or tingling in feet
- Slow-healing wounds or cuts
- Skin infections

If you have any of these, tell your doctor right away. Sometimes people with diabetes have no symptoms. That's why testing is so important.

Should I be tested for diabetes?

If you have symptoms of diabetes, you should be tested, no matter what your age. A fasting blood glucose or an HbA1C are the most common tests

used to diagnose diabetes. It's also important to get tested if you're:

- Older than 45, even if you feel well and have no symptoms or risks.
- Younger than 45. Consider getting tested if you're overweight (a body mass index [BMI] over 25) and you have additional risk factors. If the test result is normal, get tested again in 3 years.

If you've had gestational diabetes or prediabetes, get tested every year. If you have any symptoms of diabetes, your doctor may order a random blood glucose test instead.

What can I do if I'm at risk?

To help delay or lessen your risk of type 2 diabetes:

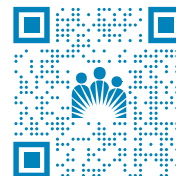
- Eat a low-fat diet with lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Exercise at least 30 to 60 minutes every day. Aim for 150 minutes total each week.
- Lose weight if you're overweight, and maintain a healthy weight (BMI between 18 to 25). Even losing 5 to 10 percent of your body weight can improve your health.
- Quit tobacco, if you smoke. Stopping tobacco is the best thing you can do for your health.
- Limit alcohol. Only 1 drink a day for women; 2 drinks or fewer a day for men.

We're here to help

We have many resources to help you manage your risk for type 2 diabetes.

Get the app

Download the **My Doctor Online** app to view your latest A1C result, receive personalized health reminders, manage appointments, and more. Sign on at kp.org/mydoctor/whatsdue.



Wellness Coaching:
kpdoc.org/wellnesscoaching
866-251-4514



Live Well With Diabetes:
kpdoc.org/diabetes



This information is not intended to diagnose or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. Some photos may include models and not actual patients.

© 2007, The Permanente Medical Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Health Engagement Consulting Services.
90274 (Revised 11/23) RL 6.7