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WELLNESS WEEKLY

Type 2 Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes strikes people of all ages, and early symptoms are subtle. In fact, about one out of three people with type 2 diabetes don't know they have it. Diabetes is a chronic condition that thwarts the body's ability to change food into energy. This allows sugar levels to build up in the blood, which can increase the risk of heart disease, loss of vision, and other serious complications.

Risk Factors You Can Control

- Being overweight defined as a body mass index over 25.
- Sedentary lifestyle.
- Abnormal cholesterol and blood fats, such as HDL "good" cholesterol lower than 35 mg/dL or a triglyceride level over 250 mg/dL.
- High blood pressure greater than 140 /90 in adults.
- Smoking.

Diagnosing Type 2 Diabetes

A simple blood test can diagnose diabetes. The A1C test gives a snapshot of your blood glucose level over the past two to three months. An A1C level of 6.5% or more is consistent with the diagnosis of diabetes. A fasting plasma glucose test is another option. You must not eat for eight hours before the test. A result above 126 is considered diabetes. An oral glucose challenge test with a two-hour blood test may also help your doctor make a diagnosis.

Managing Diabetes:

Diet

Fortunately, controlling blood sugar levels by changing diet can also cut your risk of complications. People with type 2 diabetes should carefully monitor carbohydrate consumption, as well as total fat and protein intake, and reduce calories.

Exercise

Moderate exercise, such as strength training or walking, improves the body's use of insulin and can lower blood sugar levels in people with type 2 diabetes. Being active also helps reduce body fat, lower blood pressure, and protect against heart disease.



Medication

When people with type 2 diabetes are unable to control blood sugar sufficiently with diet and exercise, medication may be added. There are many types of diabetes pills available. Some work by stimulating the pancreas to make more insulin, and others improve the effectiveness of insulin, or block the digestion of starches. Your doctor may also prescribe insulin early in on your treatment and in combination with pills.

Preventing Type 2 Diabetes

One of the most astonishing things about type 2 diabetes is that such a life-altering condition is often preventable. To lower your risk, follow the same guidelines for warding off heart disease:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise for 30 minutes, five days a week
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Talk to your doctor about being screened for prediabetes

The symptoms of type 2 diabetes due to high blood sugar may include:

- Increased thirst
- Increased hunger (especially after eating)
- Dry mouth
- Frequent urination
- Fatigue (weak, tired feeling)
- Blurred vision
- Headaches
- Loss of consciousness (rare)

Contact your health care provider if you have any type 2 diabetes symptoms or if you have further questions. It's important to get diabetes testing and start a treatment plan early to prevent serious diabetes complications