

# Diabetes: Understanding the Basics

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## What is Diabetes?

- Diabetes is a disease that affects how your body handles sugar (glucose).
- There are many types of diabetes including Type 1, Type 2 and Gestational.
- Diabetes can also be caused by certain medicine including steroids, chemotherapy, and others.

## What is the difference between Type 1 and Type 2?

**Type 1 Diabetes** is an autoimmune disease caused when your immune system attacks the cells (beta cells) in your pancreas that make insulin. People with Type 1 diabetes need to take insulin to replace what their body can no longer make.

**Type 2 Diabetes** occurs over time. Family history, weight gain, lack of physical activity, and stress can increase your risk of developing Type 2. In Type 2 diabetes, your pancreas still makes insulin, but your body doesn't use it well. The cells in your body are "resistant", making your pancreas work harder to keep blood sugar levels normal. People with Type 2 can take care of their diabetes with exercise, eating healthy, pills, and sometimes insulin.

## What is gestational diabetes?

**Gestational diabetes** can occur when you are pregnant. Most pregnant women are screened for Gestational Diabetes. Pregnancy hormones cause the body to become resistant to insulin leading to higher blood sugar levels. This can often be managed with a specific meal plan, but may also require insulin. It may go

away after you have the baby, but is a sign that you are at higher risk for getting Type 2 diabetes in the future.

### **What is glucose?**

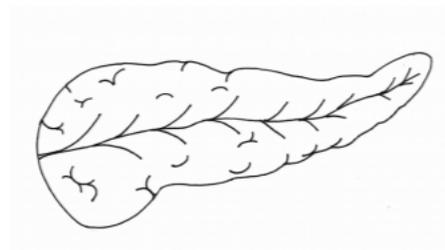
Glucose (sugar) is our body's main source of energy—like gasoline is to a car. Glucose comes from the food we eat (carbohydrates). The liver also stores glucose and releases it into your blood.

### **What is insulin?**

Insulin is a hormone made in your pancreas. It works like a key to unlock your cells and allow glucose (sugar) into the cell. Without insulin, the sugar just stays in your blood. All humans need insulin to live.

### **What is the Pancreas?**

The pancreas is an organ in your body. The pancreas makes insulin and other hormones needed to break down and get energy from the foods you eat.



### **What is A1C?**

Hemoglobin A1C is a blood test done in the lab that will give your average blood sugar over the last 3 months. The general goal for patients with diabetes is to maintain an A1C less than 7%.

Estimated Blood Sugar	A1C
298	12%
269	11%
240	10%
212	9%
183	8%
154	7%
140	6.5%
126	6%

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