

Diabetes

Got a blood sugar problem? If you do, there's a good chance you don't know it; about one-third of people with type 2 diabetes are unaware of it. Diabetes and other chronic diseases shorten lives and reduce quality of life.

Should You Be Screened?

Type 2 diabetes has few symptoms until the advanced stages, so without testing, it's unlikely you'd discover it. If you are 45 or older, the [American Diabetes Association](#) recommends screening for type 2 diabetes every 3 years. Screening at a younger age may be considered if you have risk factors for the condition. Consult your doctor and get your blood sugar tested to see if you're at risk.

Risk Factors for Diabetes

The cause of type 2 diabetes is still a matter of debate, but it appears to be related to genetics and lifestyle factors such as obesity, inactivity, and stress. While the cause of type 2 diabetes is still unclear, it is known that genetics, environment, and lifestyle all play a role.

You cannot change some of the risk factors for diabetes, such as age and family history, but there are several things you can do outside of these factors to help reduce your risk. Changes in diet and increasing physical activity can reduce your risk. People who've been diagnosed pack more protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals into their diets than people who don't know they have diabetes.

Here are known risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes:

- **Age.** Being 45 or older is considered a risk factor for type 2 diabetes. The risk of type 2 diabetes is low before age 30, and then rises with increasing age.
- **Ethnic/racial background.** People of African American, American Indian, and Hispanic ancestry are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes.
- **Family history and genetics.** Having parents or siblings with diabetes is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.
- **HDL.** An HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol level of 35 mg/dl (0.9 mmol/l) or lower is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.
- **Triglycerides.** A triglyceride level of 250 mg/dl (2.82 mmol/l) or higher is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.
- **Inactivity.** A lack of regular physical activity is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.
- **Obesity.** Being overweight can significantly increase your chances of developing diabetes. Having a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or higher is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.
- **Hypertension.** A systolic (top number) blood pressure of 140 mmHg or greater, or a diastolic (bottom number) blood pressure of 90 mmHg or higher is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes.
- **Gestational diabetes.** Women with a history of gestational diabetes and/or women who have given birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds are considered at higher risk for type 2 diabetes.

Medical Disclaimer: This information is furnished for your knowledge and understanding only. Please consult with your doctor for advice or treatment that is best for you.

Source: American Diabetes Association and iHealth™

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