

Fact Sheet

Diabetes is a disease that happens when your blood sugar level is too high. An estimated 30 million people in the United States are living with diabetes. About 1 in 4 people living with diabetes don't know they have it. Diabetes disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minorities and other diverse groups.

Office of Minority Health and Health Equity

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that happens when the level of glucose in your blood (blood sugar) is too high. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas that helps move sugar out of your blood and into your cells for energy. If you have diabetes, your body doesn't make or use insulin well.

Symptoms of diabetes include:

- Increased thirst and urination
- Increased hunger
- Fatigue
- Blurred vision
- Sores that do not heal
- Unexplained weight loss
- Numbness or tingling in the feet or hands



There are two main types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2.

Type 1 diabetes happens when your body does not make insulin because your immune system attacks and destroys the cells that make insulin. Although it can appear at any age, type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults. You are at higher risk for type 1 diabetes if you have a parent, brother, or sister with type 1 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes happens when your body does not make or use insulin well. It is usually diagnosed in adults. Some factors that put you at higher risk for type 2 diabetes include:

- Being overweight or obese
- Being 45 years or older
- Not being physically active
- Having a family history of diabetes
- Ever having gestational diabetes

Who is affected by diabetes?

Over 1 in 10 adults in the United States are living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Racial and ethnic minorities and other diverse groups have a high burden of diabetes and diabetes-related complications. For example, American Indian/Alaska Native adults are almost three times more likely than non-Hispanic white adults to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Diabetes products cleared or approved by the FDA

People living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes use glucose meters and test strips to monitor their blood sugar every day. The results help you determine your daily adjustments in treatment, know if you have high or low levels of glucose, and understand how your diet and exercise change your glucose levels.

People living with type 1 diabetes need to give themselves insulin shots every day to stay alive and healthy. They can also receive small, steady doses of insulin throughout the day using an insulin pump or an automated insulin dosing device.

Many people with type 2 diabetes may need to take diabetes medications. These may include pills, insulin, or other injectable medications.

Diabetes and clinical trials

The FDA encourages diverse participation in clinical trials. If you think a clinical trial may be right for you, talk to your health care provider. You can also search for clinical trials in your area at www.clinicaltrials.gov.

For more information on health equity, visit www.fda.gov/healthequity.