

Fact Sheet

General Diabetes Information

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes is the name given to disorders in which the body has trouble regulating its blood glucose, or blood sugar, levels. There are two major types of diabetes: type 1 and type 2.

Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is an autoimmune disease in which a person's pancreas stops producing insulin, a hormone that enables people to get energy from food. T1D usually strikes in childhood, adolescence, or young adulthood, and lasts a lifetime. Just to survive, people with T1D must take multiple injections of insulin daily or continually infuse insulin through a pump.

Type 2 diabetes is a metabolic disorder in which a person's body still produces insulin but is unable to use it effectively. Type 2 diabetes is usually diagnosed in adulthood and does not always require insulin injections. However, increased obesity has led to a recent rise in cases of type 2 diabetes in children and young adults.

Taking insulin does not cure any type of diabetes, nor does it prevent the possibility of the disease's devastating effects, including: kidney failure, blindness, nerve damage, amputation, heart attack, stroke, and pregnancy complications.

The Scope of Diabetes

- More than three million Canadians have diabetes:
 - Diagnosed: 3 million
 - Undiagnosed: 700,000¹
- More than 300,000 Canadians are living with T1D.²
- Diabetes currently affects 366 million people worldwide and is expected to affect 552 million by 2030.³
- In Canada, more than 20 people are diagnosed with diabetes every hour of every day.⁴

The Cost of Diabetes

- Diabetes is consuming an ever-larger share of provincial and territorial health care budgets.¹
- Diabetes accounts for approximately \$12.2 billion in health care costs in Canada each year.¹
- Canadians with diabetes incur medical expenses that are up to three times higher than those without diabetes.¹
- A person with diabetes can face direct costs for medication and diabetes supplies ranging from \$1,000 to \$15,000 per year.¹

The Harm Caused by Diabetes

- T1D is a leading cause of life-threatening and debilitating complications, such as blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage, heart attack, stroke, amputation, and even death.⁴
- Eighty per cent of Canadians with diabetes die from a heart attack or stroke.¹
- Diabetes is the single leading cause of blindness in Canada.¹
- Seven out of 10 non-traumatic limb amputations are the result of diabetes complications.¹
- Poorly controlled diabetes before conception and during the first trimester of pregnancy among women with T1D can cause major birth defects in five to ten per cent of pregnancies and spontaneous abortions in 15 to 20 per cent of pregnancies. On the other hand, for a woman with pre-existing diabetes, optimizing blood glucose levels before and during early pregnancy can reduce the risk of birth defects in their infants.⁵
- The life expectancy for people with T1D may be shortened by as much as 15 years.¹

¹ Canadian Diabetes Association. An economic tsunami: the cost of diabetes in Canada. December 2009.

² Canadian Diabetes Association. The prevalence and costs of diabetes. December 2009.

³ IDF: http://www.idf.org/sites/default/files/Global_Diabetes_Plan_Final.pdf

⁴ Canadian Diabetes Association. Diabetes Facts. <http://www.diabetes.ca/diabetes-and-you/what/facts/>. Accessed January 10, 2012.

⁵ http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2011.pdf. Accessed January 16, 2012.