

# *dog days of*

# DIABETES

The dog days of summer – the sticky, sweaty, humid weather – are often unpleasant. A diabetes diagnosis used to elicit the same feeling – no more eating your favorite foods, not being able to exercise and painful glucose monitoring. But wait! There's good news! Just as a steamy summer fades to a crisp autumn, since the discovery of insulin in 1921, living with diabetes allows you to do just that – live.

## **Dissecting Diabetes**

Diabetes, often referred to by doctors as diabetes mellitus, is a treatable metabolism disorder where you have high blood glucose (blood sugar). This is either because your body produces an inadequate amount of insulin, because your body's cells don't respond properly to insulin, or both. Without insulin, your body cannot convert sugar from food into nutrients for cells. The excess sugar buildup in your bloodstream and may eventually cause severe organ damage and premature death.

Doctors can determine whether you have a normal metabolism, prediabetes or diabetes with a urine test, which finds out if excess glucose is present. This is usually followed by a blood test, which measures blood glucose levels.

There are three types of diabetes – type 1, type 2 and gestational – each with their own set of symptoms. Because many of these symptoms go unnoticed or appear harmless, diabetes often goes undiagnosed. Early detection and treatment of symptoms can decrease your chance of developing diabetic complications. If you're concerned you suffer from some of these symptoms, talk to your doctor.

Type 1	Type 2*	Gestational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Body doesn't produce insulin</li> <li>■ Referred to as insulin-dependent, juvenile or early-onset diabetes</li> <li>■ Usually develops before 40th birthday</li> <li>■ Lasts a lifetime</li> <li>■ Approximately 10% of all diabetic cases</li> <li>■ Insulin injections needed, regular blood tests, special diet</li> </ul> <p><b>Symptoms:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Frequent urination</li> <li>■ Unusual thirst</li> <li>■ Extreme hunger</li> <li>■ Unusual weight loss</li> <li>■ Extreme fatigue and Irritability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Body doesn't produce enough insulin for proper function or the cells in the body are insulin resistant</li> <li>■ Risk of developing increases with age</li> <li>■ Approximately 90% of all diabetic cases worldwide</li> <li>■ Usually lasts a lifetime, progressive disease</li> <li>■ Treated with weight loss, diet, exercise, monitoring of blood glucose levels and insulin injections</li> </ul> <p>*The vast majority of patients with type 2 diabetes initially had prediabetes. This is when blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to merit a diabetes diagnosis. The cells in the body are becoming resistant to insulin.</p> <p><b>Symptoms**:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Any of the type 1 symptoms</li> <li>■ Frequent infections</li> <li>■ Blurred vision</li> <li>■ Cuts/bruises that are slow to heal</li> <li>■ Tingling/numbness in the hands/feet</li> <li>■ Recurring skin, gum, or bladder infections</li> </ul> <p>**Often those with type 2 have no symptoms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ High levels of glucose in blood during pregnancy</li> <li>■ Body unable to produce enough insulin to transport all glucose into cells resulting in rising glucose levels</li> <li>■ Diagnosis made during pregnancy</li> <li>■ Usually controlled with exercise and diet</li> <li>■ Between 10-20% will need to take some type of blood-glucose-controlling medications</li> <li>■ Undiagnosed or uncontrolled can cause delivery complications</li> </ul> <div style="border: 2px solid orange; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>DIABETICS OF DISTINCTION</b></p> <p>Prediabetes and diabetes don't discriminate. They occur in people of all ages and races - and occupations! These famous diabetics didn't let their diagnosis stand in the way of achieving their dreams – don't let it stand in the way of yours!</p> <p><b>Thomas Edison, scientist</b>  <b>Elizabeth Taylor, actress</b>  <b>Aretha Franklin, singer</b>  <b>Larry King, talk show host</b>  <b>Ray Kroc, founder of McDonalds</b></p> </div>

### Insulin Intelligence

Insulin is a hormone that is produced in your pancreas. It's released when you eat protein or when glucose is present in your blood. Insulin makes it possible for glucose to enter our body's cells; without glucose in our cells, we would not be able to function.

Insulin is injected into the fat just under your skin; this allows it to get into your bloodstream. Porcine insulin, insulin from a pig, is the most similar to human insulin. While humans can take animal insulin, genetic engineering has allowed for the production of synthetic "human" insulin.

### Keeping in Control

The goal in managing your diabetes is keep your blood glucose levels, blood pressure and cholesterol levels under control. This is done through self-monitoring of your blood glucose, exercise and healthy eating.

**Glucose monitoring** – A Glucose Meter, a small-battery operated device, tests your glucose using a small sample of your blood. The meter reads how much glucose is present in your blood.

**Exercise** – Physical activity is crucial and has a direct bearing on successfully managing your diabetes. Try fast walking, swimming, cycling, dancing or mowing the lawn; 30 minutes five days a week is recommended.

**Healthy eating** – It's a myth that diabetics spend their life hungry or always resisting tempting food items. The best diet for a diabetic is the same healthy diet that's best for everyone. So go ahead - eat your favorite foods! Just beware of the quantity of carbs, fats and proteins you consume at each meal to avoid. It's important to regulate your sugar levels so you can avoid hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and hyperglycemia (high blood sugar).

Sources:  
[www.medicalnewstoday.com/info/diabetes](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/info/diabetes)  
[www.diabetes.org/](http://www.diabetes.org/)  
<http://www.dlife.com/>  
<http://www.jdrf.org/>

St. Luke's offers diabetes support groups and exercise programs, and a pre-diabetes education class. For information, call 314-542-4848 or visit [stlukes-stl.com](http://stlukes-stl.com). Find out your risk for diabetes: take the DiabetesAware risk assessment at [stlukes-stl.com](http://stlukes-stl.com)



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