

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease where there is too much glucose (sugar) in the blood.



Glucose comes from some of the food we eat and is needed by the body for energy. Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose move from the blood into the cells where it is turned into energy. In diabetes, the body does not make enough insulin or the insulin it does make is not doing its job properly.

Some people have what is called 'insulin resistance' which means the body has to make more insulin to do the same job. This will cause high blood glucose levels. If diabetes is not looked after, this can lead to various health problems.

What happens if diabetes is not treated?

High blood glucose levels can damage the body. This can cause:

- Heart attacks and stroke.
- Loss of limbs (amputation).
- Blindness or vision impairment.
- Kidney failure.
- Nerve damage
- Teeth and gum problems.

People can have fewer problems if they have regular health checks for their diabetes.

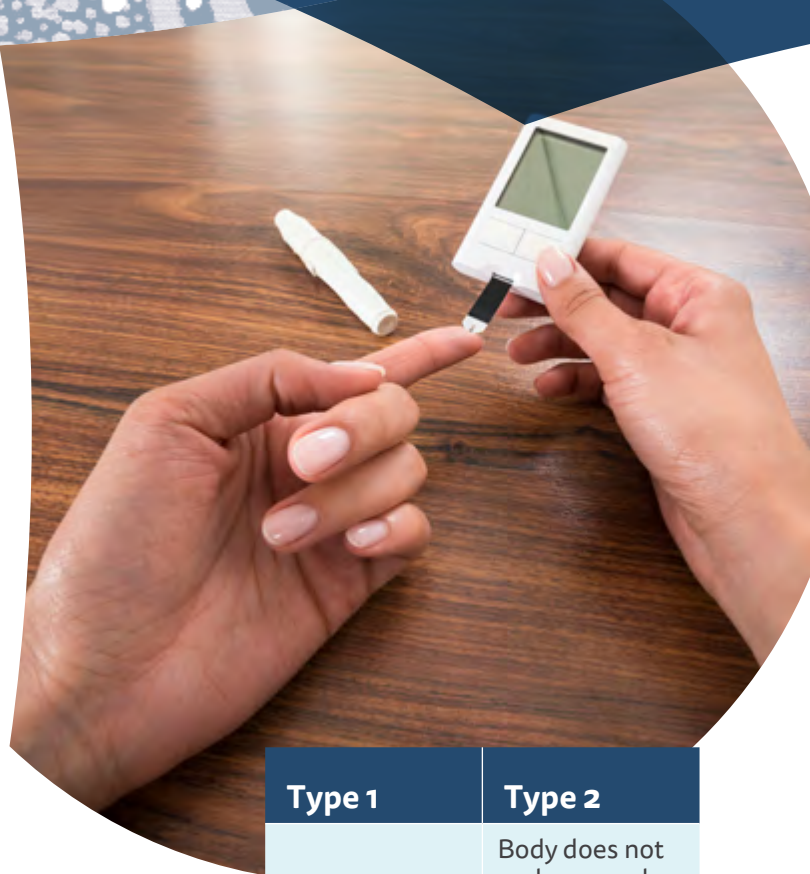
How do I look after my diabetes?

Looking after your diabetes well can prevent health problems. It is as easy as:

1. Setting some healthy lifestyle goals that you can do, such as eating well and regular exercise.
2. Regularly checking your blood glucose (sugar) levels to see if your diabetes is under control.
3. Taking your medications as prescribed by your doctor.
4. Having regular diabetes health checks. Talk to your GP or AMS or health worker for information on funded services that you may be able to use.

What type am I?

There are two main types of diabetes. Type 2 is more common in people of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.



Type 1	Type 2
No insulin made.	Body does not make enough insulin or insulin does not work properly.
Must always have insulin injections. Healthy eating and regular physical activity are important as well.	Treatment is healthy eating, physical activity, medications and sometimes insulin. Your medications may change the longer you have diabetes.
Usually occurs in young people but can occur at any age.	Usually occurs in adults, but becoming more common in younger people.



"Hands on Country"

This painting was created for Australian Diabetes Council by artist Chris Tobin, a Dharug man, and a traditional custodian in the Blue Mountains region. In the artist's words: "The central part of this painting represents the relationship of the clan – it's a unity of people looking out for each other while living independent lives."

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