

Type 2 Diabetes

What is type 2 diabetes? Type 2 diabetes, commonly called adult-onset diabetes, is characterized by insulin resistance, which causes elevated blood sugars. To meet criteria for a diagnosis of diabetes, you must have either a fasting blood sugar greater than 125, a random blood sugar greater than 200, a hemoglobin A1C greater than 6.4, or an abnormal glucose tolerance test.

Why did I get type 2 diabetes? Type 2 diabetes is caused by a multitude of factors. Most commonly, there is a genetic predisposition to diabetes inherited from other family members. Obesity, diet, and medications can also be contributing factors.

What is insulin resistance? Insulin resistance is the underlying problem in individuals with type 2 diabetes. It means that the insulin made by the pancreas does not work as well, which results in high blood sugars.

I was told I have pre-diabetes. What does this mean? Pre-diabetes means that you have insulin resistance, but your blood sugars are not high enough to meet criteria for diabetes. In patients with pre-diabetes, the pancreas is able to compensate for insulin resistance by making extra insulin. Your doctor may check your insulin levels, which may be elevated.

What is a hemoglobin A1C? Hemoglobin A1C is a blood test that gives a rough estimate of how high your blood sugars have been on average over the last 2-3 months. Your doctor will determine your goal hemoglobin A1C, which is usually around 6.5-7.0.

Why is it important to control my diabetes? Uncontrolled diabetes is a contributing cause of many serious health problems, including heart disease, strokes, kidney disease, blindness, and nerve damage. It is a leading cause for dialysis use and for infections requiring amputations. In addition, very high blood sugars can sometimes result in serious electrolyte abnormalities requiring hospitalization.

How can I prevent complications of diabetes? First and foremost, keeping your blood sugars controlled has been proven to help prevent complications of diabetes. It is also important to have a dilated eye exam, a foot exam, and a urine test every year. Your doctor may also recommend a cardiac stress test.

How can I control my diabetes? The treatment plan is different for each patient, so you should discuss with your doctor. In general, a healthy diet low in fat and carbohydrate is recommended, as well as regular exercise. Your doctor will probably recommend that you attend a diabetes class, or meet with a nutritionist. You will need to check your blood sugars at home and keep a record to bring to your appointments. Your doctor will tell you how often to

check your blood sugars. Many patients with type 2 diabetes are able to control their diabetes with pills, but some patients will require insulin therapy.

I have heard that if I lose weight, I can cure my diabetes. Is this true? Sometimes. Some patients with mild diabetes that is easily controlled with few medications are able to get off of diabetes medication with weight loss, but not all patients with diabetes can expect these results. However, even modest weight loss of 5-10% of your body weight can improve your diabetes control.