

What is Type 1 Diabetes in Adults?

Type 1 diabetes is when your pancreas does not produce insulin.

Your pancreas is a gland behind your stomach, and insulin is a hormone that allows glucose to enter your cells. (Glucose is the primary source of sugar in the blood.)

Type 1 diabetes is a chronic (long-lasting) disease.

Type 1 diabetes usually occurs in children and teens. However, it does happen in adults as well. You may have type 1 diabetes for years before you know you have it. Or it can occur quite suddenly.

What's the difference between type 1 and type 2 diabetes?

Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are very different. Type 1 is an autoimmune disorder (a condition in which your immune system mistakenly attacks your body).

Type 2 is a metabolic disorder (a situation where abnormal chemical reactions in your body disrupt a process). In Type 2 diabetes, your body produces adequate insulin, but your cells can't use it effectively.

What are the Symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes?

When Type 1 diabetes happens quickly, you might think you have the flu and brush off the symptoms. However, if you have any of these symptoms, your pancreas might be failing:

- Frequent urination (peeing a lot)
- Extreme thirst (drinking more than usual)
- Unexpected weight loss (losing weight without trying)
- Increased appetite (hungry all the time)
- Ketoacidosis (fruity or sweet-smelling breath)
- Blurry vision

Other symptoms that can take years to develop include:

- Neuropathy (tingling hands or feet)
- Lethargy (feeling very tired all the time)
- Dry skin
- Sores that heal slowly
- Getting sick more than usual

How do you know you have Type 1 Diabetes?

Both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are diagnosed through a [blood glucose test](#).

If your blood glucose test is high, you're not overweight, or you have other causes of [Type 2 diabetes](#), your doctor may order [specific blood tests](#) to check for markers of Type 1 diabetes.

Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are distinct diseases and have different treatments.

How is Type 1 Diabetes Managed?

You manage type 1 diabetes by taking insulin every day. You can take insulin by either:

- Giving yourself a shot, usually several times a day
- Wearing a small pump that continuously delivers insulin to your body.

If you have a slow-onset version of Type 1 diabetes called LADA (latent autoimmune diabetes in adults), your pancreas produces some insulin. Still, it's not activating as much insulin as it should.

If you have LADA, your first treatment might be with oral medications and changes to your diet. This plan will change over time as the pancreas fails. There is no way to predict when (or how quickly) your pancreas will quit producing insulin, but it will happen.

Who gets Type 1 Diabetes?

We're not entirely sure [why some people get Type 1 diabetes](#). If someone in your family has diabetes, you are at greater risk of having it. However, it also often occurs in people who have no family with the disease.

You don't get type 1 diabetes from your lifestyle habits. However, lack of healthy eating and not exercising can lead to having type 2 diabetes.

What should you do if you have type 1 Diabetes?

You might feel scared and confused after you've been diagnosed with diabetes. This is a common reaction, and you're not alone. It takes time to adjust to a new diet.

Plan on taking a full 12 months to change your lifestyle and mindset. This way, you can create a sustainable plan for successfully living with diabetes. Many adults feel better after they make some lifestyle adjustments:

- Eating fewer carbs, you'll probably lose a bit of weight.
- You'll no longer feel foggy-minded

- You'll have more energy.
- Sugar cravings will diminish.
- Exercise will be refreshing instead of draining.

Seeing these benefits makes it easier to make the changes your doctor suggests.

How can you learn more about diabetes?

One of the best things you can do is attend a diabetic education class. In class, you'll learn what to eat, how to use **your meter**, and ways to manage blood sugar. You'll also meet other newly diagnosed people with diabetes. In addition, it's helpful to share fears and ideas for coping with change with others in your situation.

Your doctor can recommend a class, or the American Diabetes Association has a tool to [find education classes near you](#).

Some helpful resources for learning about diabetes include:

[Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation](#)

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

[American Diabetes Association](#)
