

# Type 2 diabetes:

# the basics

## What is type 2 diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is a disease in which your pancreas does not produce enough insulin, or your body does not properly use the insulin it makes. As a result, glucose (sugar) builds up in your blood instead of being used for energy. Your body gets glucose from foods like bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, milk and fruit. To use this glucose, your body needs insulin. Insulin is a hormone that helps your body to control the level of glucose in your blood.

## The good news

You can live a long and healthy life by keeping your blood glucose levels in the target range set by you and your healthcare provider. You can do this by:

- Eating healthy meals and snacks
- Enjoying regular physical activity
- Monitoring your blood glucose using a home blood glucose meter \*
- Aiming for a healthy body weight
- Taking diabetes medications including insulin and other medications, if prescribed by your doctor
- Managing stress effectively

**\*Discuss with your healthcare provider how often you should measure your blood glucose level**





## Who can help you?

Your healthcare team is there to help you. Depending on your needs and the resources available in your community, your team may include a family doctor, diabetes educator (nurse and/or dietitian), endocrinologist, pharmacist, social worker, exercise physiologist, psychologist, foot care specialist, eye care specialist. They can answer your questions about how to manage diabetes and work with you to adjust your food plan, activity and medications.

**Remember, you are the most important member of your healthcare team**

## Complications of diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is a progressive, life-long disease. It may become more difficult to keep your blood glucose levels within your target range. High blood glucose levels can cause complications such as blindness, heart disease, kidney problems, nerve damage and erectile dysfunction. Fortunately, good diabetes care and management can prevent or delay the onset of these complications.

## You can reduce your chances of developing these complications if you:

- Keep your blood glucose within your target range\*
- Avoid smoking
- Keep your cholesterol and other blood fats within your target range\*
- Keep your blood pressure within your target range\*
- Take care of your feet
- Have regular visits with your doctor, diabetes team, dentist and eye-care specialist

\*Discuss your target ranges with your healthcare provider

## Get the support you need

A positive and realistic attitude towards your diabetes can help you manage it. Talk to others who have diabetes. Ask your local Canadian Diabetes Association branch about joining a peer-support group or taking part in an information session.

*Across the country, the Canadian Diabetes Association is leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthy lives while we work to find a cure. Our community-based network of supporters help us provide education and services to people living with diabetes, advocate for our cause, break ground towards a cure and translate research into practical applications.*

\*This document reflects the 2013 Canadian Diabetes Association Clinical Practice Guidelines. ©2013 Copyright

 **Canadian  
Diabetes**  
Association

**Related articles:** *Managing Your Blood Glucose, Managing Weight and Diabetes, Physical activity and diabetes, Just the basics: tips for healthy eating, Cholesterol and diabetes, High blood pressure and diabetes, Smoking and diabetes, Foot care: a step toward good health and Staying healthy with diabetes*

**diabetes.ca | 1-800 BANTING**