

Type 2 diabetes: are you at risk

Knowing if you are at risk of type 2 diabetes is important as it gives you a chance to make healthy lifestyle changes that can reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Why is knowing my risk important?

People with type 2 diabetes have a higher risk of health problems like heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, blood problems, amputation, damage to nerves, eyes and kidneys. If you know that you are at risk of diabetes then this gives you the chance to make changes which delay or prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. Regular risk screening and testing for diabetes also means that if you do get diabetes it will be detected early. Early detection of diabetes reduces the risks of problems.

How do I know if I am at risk of type 2 diabetes?

The major risks for developing type 2 diabetes are:

- > Forty five (age). As people get older their risks increase.
- > Family (hereditary). Diabetes tends to run in families and certain groups of people such as Aboriginal Australians, Indians, Polynesians and people of Southern European descent.
- > Above your most healthy weight. The wider your waist is the higher the risk.

Other risk factors include having high blood pressure, and having had gestational diabetes (diabetes in pregnancy).

The Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool

To find out more about your risk ask your doctor to assess your risk using the 'Australian Type 2 Diabetes Assessment Tool'. You may like to do the test yourself.

The tool can be found on the internet at

www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/Understanding-Diabetes/Are-You-at-Risk/

You can answer the questions from the tool online or you may like to print it out and fill it in. Take the answers to your doctor to get advice about reducing your risks.



What can I do to reduce the risks?

You cannot change your age or your family history but you can increase your activity and aim for your most healthy weight. Follow these golden rules for a healthy lifestyle.

Weight/Waist wise

Aim for your most healthy weight. Making your lifestyle more healthy can help delay or prevent type 2 diabetes.

- > Be active and aim to exercise daily. Include activity you enjoy such as walking. Work towards 150 minutes of moderate activity a week.
- > Enjoy a healthy eating plan that includes wholegrain breads and cereals, fruit and vegetables, low fat dairy products, and lean meat and fish.

Drink wise

If you drink alcohol – limit the amount to 2 standard drinks per day. Alcohol is energy (calorie) dense and can increase your weight. If you are above your most healthy weight consider limiting alcohol intake further.

Quit for life

Smoking increases blood pressure and damages blood vessels. Stop smoking.

Key points to remember

There are ways that you can or even prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes like increasing your activity and have healthy eating habits.

You can have type 2 diabetes and not even know that you have it. Many people do not have any signs or symptoms. Regular screening is needed to detect diabetes early.

Early detection of diabetes reduces the risks for problems.

If you have any risk factors for diabetes it is important to talk to your doctor about reducing risks and the need for regular screening.

Where can I go for more information?

Your local doctor

Diabetes Outreach www.diabetesoutreach.org.au/consumer

Dietitians Association www.daa.asn.au

Diabetes Australia www.diabetesaustralia.com.au

QUIT smoking www.quitnow.info.au/

Be active www.beactive.com.au/

For more information

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