

# Diabetes Facts - 2009



**Diabetes Australia-NSW is the leading charity dealing with diabetes**

## Prevalence

More than 3 million Australians have diabetes or pre-diabetes. Worldwide – 246 million people have diabetes (1)

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs when there is too much glucose in the blood because the body is not producing insulin or not using insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone needed for glucose to enter the cells and be converted to energy.

## Two main types of diabetes

Type 1 diabetes (insulin dependent)	Type 2 diabetes (non-insulin dependent)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Occurs when the pancreas no longer produces the insulin needed</li><li>◆ Represents 10 to 15% of all cases of diabetes</li><li>◆ Is the most common chronic childhood diseases in developed nations</li><li>◆ Is not caused by lifestyle factors</li><li>◆ Type 1 diabetes is increasing at about 3% a year (2)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Occurs when the pancreas is not producing enough insulin and the insulin is not working effectively</li><li>◆ Represents 85 to 90% of all cases of diabetes</li><li>◆ Risk factors include family history, being overweight and ethnic background</li><li>◆ Lifestyle factors such as unhealthy eating and lack of physical activity can contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes</li></ul>
<b>Diagnosis</b> Usually in childhood or young adulthood, although it can occur at any age.	<b>Diagnosis</b> Usually in adults over the age of 45 <u>but it is increasingly occurring at a younger age.</u>
<b>Symptoms</b> Usually abrupt onset. Symptoms include excessive thirst and urination, unexplained weight loss, weakness and fatigue, irritability.	<b>Symptoms</b> Often symptoms go unnoticed as the disease develops gradually. Symptoms may include blurred vision, skin infections, slow healing, tingling and numbness in the feet. Sometimes no symptoms are noticed at all.
<b>Management</b> Lifelong insulin injections every day, regular blood glucose level tests, healthy eating plan and regular physical activity.	<b>Management</b> Regular physical activity and healthy eating. Over time treatment may progress from lifestyle modification to requiring tablets and/or insulin injections.

## Risk factors for type 2 Diabetes

Risk factors you cannot change: Age, family history, ethnic background, gestational diabetes, Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS).

Risk factors you can change: Maintaining healthy weight, making lifestyle changes by following a healthy eating plan and doing regular physical activity and having regular health checks.

## Gestational diabetes (3)

Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes that only occurs in pregnancy and usually disappears after the birth but may reoccur in the next pregnancy.

- ◆ The woman's body may not be able to make enough insulin or may not be able to use it correctly during this time.
- ◆ The extra stress of pregnancy on the body can cause high blood glucose levels
- ◆ It is usually found by having a blood test between 24 and 28 weeks of pregnancy
- ◆ Up to 50% of woman who have had gestational diabetes may develop type 2 diabetes within five years

## Complications of diabetes

Complications include increased risk of heart disease, Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD) and stroke, blindness, kidney failure, limb amputation and erectile dysfunction in men.

**Diabetes and heart disease/stroke/PVD.** Diabetes is also often associated with high blood pressure and high blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides) and increases the risk of heart attack and stroke/PVD. Close to 80% of people with diabetes will die from a heart attack or stroke (3).

**Diabetes and eye disease.** Retinopathy is a major long-term complication of diabetes. It affects about 1 in 4 people with diabetes (4). The development of retinopathy is strongly related to the length of time diabetes has been present and the degree of blood glucose control. Regular eye checks and treatment can help prevent retinopathy.

**Diabetes and kidney disease.** Diabetes is the fastest growing cause of kidney failure. It is the leading cause of end stage renal disease (ESRD). About 30% of people with diabetes will develop kidney disease (5).

Diabetes and lower limbs. Neuropathy or peripheral nerve disease and blood vessel damage may lead to leg ulcers and serious foot problems from which limb amputation may result.

Diabetes Facts *continued*

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## **Statistics**

- ◆ Diabetes is the sixth highest cause of death by disease in Australia (6)
- ◆ People with diabetes are twice as likely to have high blood pressure and also are more likely to have elevated blood fats e.g. cholesterol, triglycerides (2)
- ◆ They are twice as likely to have cardiovascular disease, e.g. heart disease and stroke (2)
- ◆ One in four Australian adults has either diabetes or impaired glucose metabolism (3)

### **People with diabetes in 2005 (2)**

- ◆ 15% were hospitalised with coronary heart disease (2)
- ◆ 38,700 Australians were hospitalised for eye complications caused by diabetes (2)
- ◆ 90% undergoing a lower limb amputation had a history of ulceration (2)
- ◆ 3,400 had amputations (65 a day) (2)
- ◆ 11% of people with diabetes have had a heart attack (2)
- ◆ 23% died from kidney disease (2).

## **The Human Burden**

- ◆ Diabetes is Australia's fastest growing chronic disease (3)
- ◆ An estimated 2.1 million Australians have pre-diabetes (3,6)
- ◆ One person is diagnosed every seven minutes (7)
- ◆ About 1,000,000 Australians are diagnosed with diabetes. However, for every one diagnosed, another is undiagnosed (3,6)
- ◆ Based on this, by 2014, Diabetes Australia-NSW expects the number of people with diabetes to total approximately 4.5 million (7)

## **What to do if you are concerned about your risk...**

The Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool, AUSDRISK, was developed by the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute on behalf of the Australian, State and Territory Governments as part of the COAG Diabetes reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes initiative.

AUSDRISK is a short list of questions that have been developed to help both health professionals and health consumers to assess the risk of developing type 2 diabetes over the next five years.

AUSDRISK can be completed by the patient or with the assistance of a health professional or practice staff. Patients aged 40 – 49 years with a 'high' score result from the AUSDRISK tool are eligible to attend a Type 2 Diabetes Risk Evaluation (MBS Item 713) by their GP.

Please go to <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PreventionofType2DiabetesProgram-RiskAssessmentTool+> or if it's easier for you, go to Google and type in AUSDRISK and follow the link to the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing page.

## **The cost burden (8)**

- ◆ Type 2 diabetes costs Australia \$3 billion a year
- ◆ The cost of diabetes to the community for a person with no complications is \$9,625 a year
- ◆ For a person with complications, the cost to the community is \$15,850
- ◆ The 4% of people who have diagnosed diabetes account for 12% of the total health costs in Australia

## **Diabetes research**

There is no cure for either type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Diabetes Australia-NSW supports research.

### **Lifestyle changes can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.**

#### **For more information:**

Phone: 1300 136 588 *Website:* [www.diabetesnsw.com.au](http://www.diabetesnsw.com.au)

#### **References:**

(1) Diabetes Atlas. IDF, 2006; (2) Diabetes: Australian Facts. AIHW, 2008; (3) AusDiab 2005. IDI, 2006; (4) Vision Australia Foundation; (5) International Diabetes Federation, 2009; (6) Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 (7) NDSS, 2009 (8) DiabCost. Diabetes Australia, 2003;

