



What is Type 1 diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes occurs when the pancreas is unable to make enough insulin. Insulin is a hormone that acts as a key to let glucose from the food we eat, pass from the blood stream into the cells to provide energy. Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed during childhood or young adulthood but can occur at any age.

What are the symptoms?

In diabetes, glucose stays in the blood, causing the blood glucose level to become abnormally high.

Symptoms may include:

- Being very thirsty
- Passing lots of urine
- Losing weight
- Being dehydrated
- Being very tired
- Tummy pain
- Feeling generally unwell

What causes Type 1 diabetes?

Some people carry genes which might make them more likely to get Type 1 diabetes. However, it only develops in these people when something triggers the immune system to destroy the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. These triggers are thought to be factors in the environment, but as yet are not well understood.

Treatment

Type 1 diabetes is treated by:

- Replacing insulin by injection several times every day for life.
- Following a healthy eating plan including regular carbohydrate-containing foods.
- Being physically active on a regular basis.
- Testing blood glucose levels several times a day.
- Having regular medical check-ups with the diabetes team, that may include several or all of the following: diabetes specialist, diabetes educator, dietitian, social worker, psychologist.

References: Caring for Diabetes in Children and Adolescents – A Parent's Manual, Combined Children's Services of NSW, editors G Ambler, V Barron, C May and E Ambler; School Pack, International Diabetes Federation & Diabetes Australia.

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