

Your Health Reference Sheet
Topic: Diabetes Types I and II
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Whenever we hear statistics on diabetes and how it's reaching epidemic levels, those statistics refer to Type II or adult-onset diabetes and not Type I or juvenile-onset diabetes. Type II is the kind of diabetes that's the result of lifestyle patterns and food choices. This particular type affects over 24 million Americans with more than an estimated 5.4 million people unaware that they have it. Type II diabetes is currently the third leading cause of death in the United States. However, it's expected by 2010 to exceed both heart disease and cancer as the leading cause of death due to the complications it creates.

Minorities are particularly at high risk. For example, African Americans have a 60 percent increased risk and Hispanics have a 90 percent increased risk of developing Type II diabetes. In fact, in the Central Valley of California (United States), where the population is mostly Latino and Mexican Americans, every week at least 19 people die of diabetes and the toll is rising. The latest figures show that 1 out of 10 people in this region have Type II diabetes. Why? The answer is, in part, because of the type of food they eat and their lack of money to see a doctor for screening regularly.

The treatment for diabetes has become increasingly expensive as it requires multiple medications, frequent doctor visits and blood sugar checks requiring special equipment. Diabetes has also become increasingly complex to treat because of the many complications associated with it. These complications include hypertension, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, diabetic neuropathy, diabetic retinopathy, loss of sexual function, difficult wound healing, the propensity for amputation of the lower limbs such as toes and feet, and Syndrome X also referred to as the metabolic syndrome.

General Description:

Diabetes is a chronic degenerative disease of the pancreas in which disturbances in normal insulin mechanisms impair the body's ability to use and metabolize carbohydrates. Normally, the hormone insulin is secreted by the pancreas in low amounts. When you eat a meal, the glucose (sugar) from the meal stimulates the pancreas to release insulin. The amount of insulin it releases is in direct proportion to the size of the meal. So supersizing your meals supersizes the amount of insulin the pancreas has to produce and release. The role of insulin is to help move certain nutrients—primarily glucose—from the digestive system into the cells of the body's tissues. Glucose is the source of energy the cells need in order to function properly. When the glucose can't get into the body's cells, it builds up in the blood and the cells can't function properly, thus causing the metabolic syndrome. When the blood sugar level in the bloodstream increases, a person can experience:

- Extreme thirst due to dehydration as the kidneys increase urination to try to clear the sugar from the bloodstream and the body.

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The information expresses a holistic and energetic perspective of illness and isn't intended to replace professional medical advice and care. Please consult a medical professional or a qualified practitioner if you have any health concerns.