

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a serious disease where your body is not able to use the foods you eat for energy. Your body normally breaks down most of the foods you eat into a form of energy called glucose. Glucose is a type of sugar. A hormone called insulin is needed to move the sugar from your blood into your body's cells, where it is used to make energy. Insulin in the body is made by the pancreas. A person cannot live without insulin.

Diabetes occurs when the body:

- ◆ Does not make insulin at all
- ◆ Does not make enough insulin
- ◆ Does not use the insulin that it makes

Diabetes, therefore, leaves extra sugar in the blood.



There are two types of diabetes

- ◆ Type-1 diabetes happens when the body does not make any insulin. Usually, type-1 diabetes occurs in children or young adults.

- ◆ Type-2 diabetes occurs when the body does not make enough insulin or the body is not able to use the insulin it makes. People are usually older when they find out that they have type-2 diabetes. It is becoming more common in teen-agers who are obese.

Diabetes causes many health problems, including blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke, and can lead to leg amputations.

Who is most likely to get diabetes?

Diabetes often runs in families, so people with blood relatives who have diabetes are more likely to also get diabetes. Type-2 diabetes runs in families more than type-1 diabetes.

What are the risk factors for type-2 diabetes?

- ◆ Family history of type-2 diabetes
- ◆ Being overweight or inactive
- ◆ High blood pressure
- ◆ High levels of triglycerides in the blood or low levels of "good cholesterol" (HDL) in the blood
- ◆ Over 40 years old
- ◆ Diabetes during pregnancy or giving birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds

