How can I manage my diabetes?

Weight loss, exercise and a healthy diet are keys to managing type 2 diabetes.

July 13, 2021 By Liz Highleyman

Diabetes is a condition in which blood sugar (glucose) levels are too high. Type 1 diabetes, which usually arises in early childhood, involves inadequate production of insulin, a hormone that enables cells to use glucose for energy. People with type 1 diabetes need to take insulin, administered via daily injections or a pump.

Type 2 diabetes occurs later in life, when cells in the pancreas no longer produce enough insulin or cells are unable to use it, a condition known as insulin resistance. It may be preceded by a milder form called prediabetes. Risk factors include overweight or obesity, lack of physical activity and family history. Type 2 diabetes is often accompanied by abdominal fat accumulation, high blood pressure and abnormal blood fat levels (collectively known as metabolic syndrome).

Regular blood glucose monitoring, weight loss, exercise and a healthy diet are keys to managing type 2 diabetes or preventing prediabetes from progressing. Experts recommend eating a balanced diet low in sugar and fat, getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week and quitting smoking. Some people with type 2 diabetes may need oral medications or insulin.

It is important to keep blood sugar under control because unmanaged diabetes can lead to serious health problems, including heart and kidney disease, eye problems and nerve damage.

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