

# Diabetes Facts

**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 (7)

## 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 gland no longer produces the insulin needed</li><li>◆ Represents 10 to 15% of all cases of diabetes</li><li>◆ Is one of 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 (1)</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, ethnic background and being overweight</li><li>◆ Lifestyle factors such as unhealthy eating and lack of physical activity can contribute to the development of type 2 diabetes</li></ul>
<p><b>Diagnosis</b></p> <p>Usually in childhood or young adulthood, although it can occur at any age.</p>	<p><b>Diagnosis</b></p> <p>Usually in adults over the age of 45 <u>but it is increasingly occurring at a younger age.</u></p>
<p><b>Symptoms</b></p> <p>Usually abrupt onset. Symptoms can include excessive thirst and urination, unexplained weight loss, weakness and fatigue, irritability.</p>	<p><b>Symptoms</b></p> <p>Sometimes symptoms go unnoticed as the disease develops gradually. Symptoms may include any of those for type 1 diabetes plus blurred vision, skin infections, slow healing, tingling and numbness in the feet. Sometimes no symptoms are noticed at all.</p>
<p><b>Management</b></p> <p>Lifelong insulin injections every day, regular blood glucose level tests, healthy eating plan and regular physical activity.</p>	<p><b>Management</b></p> <p>Regular physical activity and healthy eating. Over time treatment may progress from lifestyle modification to requiring tablets and/or insulin injections.</p>

## Pre-diabetes (1)

Pre-diabetes is a condition when blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not yet high enough for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. Left untreated it may develop into type 2 diabetes within 5 to 10 years.

## Gestational diabetes (1)

Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes that occurs in pregnancy and mostly disappears after the birth.

- ◆ The woman's body may not be able to make enough insulin or may not be able to use it correctly during this time.
- ◆ Significantly increases the risk for women to develop type 2 diabetes later in life
- ◆ 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 women may develop type 2 diabetes within five years

## Complications

Complications include increased risk of heart disease and stroke, blindness, kidney failure, limb amputation and erectile dysfunction in men.

**Diabetes and heart disease/stroke.** Diabetes is also often associated with high blood pressure and high blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides) and causes an increased risk of heart attack and stroke. Close to 80% of people with diabetes will die from a heart attack or stroke (1).

**Diabetes and eye disease.** Retinopathy is a major long-term complication of diabetes. It affects about 1 in 4 people with diabetes (5). 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-caused blindness.

**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. (6)

**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.

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## **Statistics**

- ◆ Diabetes is the sixth highest cause of death by disease in Australia (2)
- ◆ People with diabetes are almost three times more likely to have high blood pressure, obesity or elevated blood fats eg cholesterol, triglycerides (1)
- ◆ They are two to three times more likely to have cardiovascular disease, eg heart disease and stroke (2)
- ◆ One in four Australian adults has either diabetes or impaired glucose metabolism (1)

### **People with diabetes in 2000 (2)**

- ◆ 19% were hospitalised with coronary heart disease
- ◆ 15.4% had retinopathy
- ◆ 90% undergoing a lower limb amputation had a history of ulceration
- ◆ 3,404 had amputations (9 a day)
- ◆ 12% over the age of 25 had a heart attack. 9% of these had a stroke
- ◆ 22.6% died from kidney disease

## **The Human Burden**

- ◆ Diabetes is Australia's fastest growing chronic disease (1)
- ◆ An estimated 2 million Australians have pre-diabetes (1)
- ◆ One person is diagnosed every seven minutes (3)
- ◆ More than 825,000 Australians are officially diagnosed with diabetes. For every one diagnosed, excluding those with type 1 diabetes- another is undiagnosed = 1.5million. (3)
- ◆ By 2012, Diabetes Australia-NSW expects the number of people with diabetes to total 4 million (3)
- ◆ The total number of people with diabetes and pre-diabetes is 3.2 million (1)

## **High risk categories**

- ◆ People with a family history of diabetes have 2 to 6 times the risk of developing type 2
- ◆ Over 45 years of age and have high blood pressure or high blood fats eg cholesterol
- ◆ Over 45 years of age and overweight
- ◆ Over 45 years of age and one of more members of the family has/had diabetes
- ◆ Over 55 years of age
- ◆ Have heart disease or had a heart attack
- ◆ Have/had high blood glucose levels during pregnancy (gestational diabetes)
- ◆ Have pre-diabetes: Impaired Fasting Glucose (IFG) or Impaired Glucose Tolerance (IGT)
- ◆ Have Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome
- ◆ Over 35 years of age and are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- ◆ Over 35 years of age and from Pacific Islands, Indian subcontinent or Chinese cultural background
- ◆ In 2000-01, death rates from diabetes among Indigenous Australians were almost 15 times as higher than other Australians (2)
- ◆ Certain overseas born Australians have a higher prevalence of diabetes than people born in Australia. (2)
- ◆ Indigenous Australians are 10 times as likely to have diabetes than other Australians (1)

## **The cost burden (4)**

- ◆ 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
- ◆ 4% of people who have diagnosed diabetes account for 12% of health costs in Australia

## **Diabetes research**

There is no cure for either type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Diabetes Australia supports research through the Diabetes Australia Research Trust. (DART)

### **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)

### **Source of statistics**

(1) AusDiab 2005, (2) AIHW-2003, (3)NDSS, (4)Diabcost, (5) Vision Australia Foundation, (6)International Diabetes Federation and (7) IDF Atlas

