



About Diabetes

Diabetes is a disease in which your body either can't produce insulin or can't properly use the insulin it produces. It is a complex disease with multiple causes and no known cure. The three main types are:

- **Type 1** diabetes is found in five to 10 per cent of Canadians with diabetes, and occurs when the body is unable to produce insulin, a hormone that controls the level of glucose (sugar) in the blood. The cause of type 1 diabetes is unknown and it is not preventable. It most commonly begins in childhood and occurs when a person's immune system destroys the cells in the pancreas that make insulin.
- **Type 2** diabetes is the most common, where the pancreas either cannot effectively use or produce enough insulin. It is found in approximately 90-95 per cent of Canadians living with diabetes. Alarmingly, type 2 diabetes, which used to be a type of diabetes exclusively experienced by adults, is now increasingly developing in children. The causes of type 2 diabetes can be genetic, behavioural and/or environmental. People of Indigenous, Asian, Hispanic or African descent are at higher risk of type 2 diabetes.
 - **Prediabetes** occurs when an individual's blood glucose levels are high, but not yet high enough to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes. Approximately 50 per cent of those with prediabetes go on to develop type 2 diabetes.
- **Gestational** diabetes is a temporary condition that develops during pregnancy. Blood glucose levels usually return to normal following delivery, however both mother and child are at higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

Diabetes is growing

Diabetes has reached epidemic proportions in Canada. Currently, 11 million Canadians are living with diabetes or prediabetes. Every three minutes, another Canadian is diagnosed with diabetes. By 2029, an estimated 14 million Canadians will have diabetes or prediabetes (including undiagnosed).

Why diabetes matters to you

- **20** Canadians are diagnosed with diabetes every hour of every day
- Diabetes contributes to:
 - **30 per cent** of strokes
 - **40 per cent** of heart attacks
 - **50 per cent** of kidney failure requiring dialysis
 - **70 per cent** of all non-traumatic lower-limb amputations



- Leading cause of blindness
- Having diabetes can shorten one's lifespan by five to 15 years
- [According to Stats Canada](#), not including accidents, diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death for all ages in Canada

Nevertheless, with proper management and a strong team of family and health-care professionals, complications can be prevented or delayed. Now is the time to End Diabetes – its health impacts, as well as the blame, shame and misinformation associated with it.

Contact Diabetes Canada

For additional information on diabetes and Diabetes Canada, visit diabetes.ca or call **1-800-BANTING (226-8464)**. To connect with the diabetes community online, join the conversations on Facebook (facebook.com/DiabetesCanada) and Twitter ([@DiabetesCanada](https://twitter.com/DiabetesCanada)).