



# MAGNACARE<sup>SM</sup>

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## Diabetes FAQs

If you're new to your diabetes diagnosis, or even if you're an old hand, you may have questions about the disease. Below are a number of frequently asked questions, the answers to which may surprise you.

### What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition that occurs when your pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin (or no insulin at all) or when your body doesn't respond normally to insulin. This results in high concentrations of glucose in your bloodstream, which can cause serious health complications. Diabetes is a chronic disease, but you can treat it with medication, diet, and exercise.

### What are the types of diabetes?

#### Type 1 diabetes

About 10% of the people who have diabetes have type 1, which most often (but not always) develops in children or young adults. It is thought to be caused by an autoimmune disorder in which your body attacks the pancreas, destroying insulin-producing cells. People who have type 1 diabetes need insulin daily.

#### Type 2 diabetes

Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of the disease: one in eight Americans have it. It's a metabolic disorder where the pancreas produces enough insulin but the body doesn't use it properly. It can be treated with medication, diet, and exercise.

## Gestational diabetes

This type of diabetes develops in some pregnant women when hormones from the placenta block their ability to use or produce insulin. It usually goes away after pregnancy, but afterward people are more at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Having gestational diabetes does not mean your child will develop diabetes, however.

## Prediabetes

One in three American adults, or 98 million people, can be classified as “prediabetic,” meaning their blood sugar levels are higher than normal, although not high enough to be classified as type 2. Losing weight, changing your diet, and exercising can reduce your chance of developing type 2 diabetes.

### How is prediabetes diagnosed?

A common way to diagnose is through an A1C blood test, which measures your average blood sugar level over the past two to three months by determining what percentage of your hemoglobin is coated with sugar. A result in the range of 5.7% to 6.4% indicates prediabetes.

## Common myths about diabetes

### **I don't have a family history of diabetes, so I won't get it.**

If you have a family history of type 2 diabetes, you are at higher risk, but in general the risk of diabetes increases with age, blood pressure, and carrying too much excess weight, so you can acquire diabetes without a family history.

### **Now that I have diabetes, I can never eat sugar or carbohydrates again.**

Not true. You can safely include carbs and some sugar in your meals, but you should keep portions moderate to prevent suddenly spiking your blood sugar levels and avoid consuming sugary soft drinks. A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* showed that drinking one or more full-sugar sodas per day can raise your chances of developing type 2 diabetes by as much as 10%.

### **Is it true that even coffee affects blood sugar levels?**

According to the Mayo Clinic, coffee (unsweetened, of course) will not affect your blood sugar levels. In fact, some studies indicate that coffee consumption (caffeinated or decaf) may actually reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Caffeine affects each person differently, however, so it's good to pose this question to your doctor.

### **I have type 2 and my doctor wants me to take medication for it. That's a setback, right?**

No. Some cases of type 2 diabetes can be controlled (although not cured) by diet and exercise, but not all. The most important thing is controlling your blood sugar, and medication will help.

**Sources:** <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/7104-diabetes> | <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/diabetes> | <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/diabetes> | <https://www.nm.org/healthbeat/healthy-tips/5-surprising-facts-about-diabetes> | <https://diabetes.org/about-diabetes/diabetes-myths> | [https://cdn.nutrition.org/article/S2475-2991\(22\)14387-8/fulltext](https://cdn.nutrition.org/article/S2475-2991(22)14387-8/fulltext) | <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/type-2-diabetes/expert-answers/blood-sugar/faq-2005794>

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