

# UNDERSTANDING DIABETES

## WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a health condition that affects the way an individual's body processes glucose (blood sugar). In people without diabetes, insulin turns glucose into energy. When the body produces too little insulin or struggles to use it well, the glucose remains in your blood stream and health issues may develop over time.

### TYPES

#### TYPE 1

An individual's pancreas makes little or no insulin. Type 1 generally develops early in life, but may occur later in life as well.

#### TYPE 2

An individual's cells struggle to use insulin well. The pancreas' ability to produce insulin decreases over time. Type 2 may be developed at any age, but generally develops in adulthood.

### SYMPTOMS

- Weight loss
- Constant thirst
- Tiredness
- Blurry vision
- Frequent urination
- Dry skin

## HOW TO MANAGE DIABETES

**Blood Sugar** - Work with a health care team to set your blood sugar target ranges. Use proper dieting, monitoring, exercising and in some cases, medication, to keep blood sugar levels within your target range.

**Diet** - Select low-calorie foods that have less fat, salt and sugar. Eat at set times and avoid missing meals.

**Liquids** - Keep alcoholic drinks to a minimum. Choose water over sugary drinks, including juices.

**Exercise** - Aim for 2.5 hours of exercise per week. Be sure to work all your major muscle groups and hydrate during exercise. Monitoring: Check your blood sugar before exercising, enjoying meals and snacks, and sleeping. Note what makes your blood sugar levels rise and fall.

**Medication** - Individuals with Type 1 diabetes need to take insulin several times throughout the day. Some individuals with Type 2 diabetes may be able to manage their blood sugar levels through diet and exercise, while others must take medication.

## WHAT TO DO IN EMERGENCIES

### In the case of Low Blood Sugar (Hypoglycemia)

Too much insulin intake, accidentally missing a meal, or irregular exercise are all potential causes of low blood sugar. To treat levels that are lower than 70mg/dl, immediately do one of the below:

- Drink half a can of soda or fruit juice
- Eat four pieces of hard candy
- Take four glucose tablets

### In the case of High Blood Sugar (Hyperglycemia)

Too much insulin intake, accidentally missing a meal, or irregular exercise are all potential causes of low blood sugar. To treat levels that are lower than 70mg/dl, immediately do one of the below:

## WATCH OUT FOR:

### Hypoglycemia Unawareness

- happens when you do not feel or notice warning symptoms of hypoglycemia. Be sure to continuously monitor your blood sugar.

**Diabetic Ketoacidosis (DKA)** - when insulin levels in an individual are so low that blood sugar can't enter cells and be used as energy. The body then begins to break down fat into a fuel called, "ketones." A quick build-up of ketones makes blood acidic and is life-threatening.