

TERMS FOR UNDERSTANDING YOUR TYPE 2 DIABETES

Definitions for Common Terms Related to Type 2 Diabetes

TYPE 2 DIABETES AND BLOOD SUGAR¹⁻⁴

This list of terms may help you better understand type 2 diabetes, the complications that may occur, and general care recommendations. If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or diabetes care team.

A1C

The A1C test measures a person's average glucose or blood sugar level over the last 2 to 3 months. It can provide you with a picture of your blood sugar control over time. Results are given as a percentage or can be converted to the average blood sugar over time. For the majority of people with type 2 diabetes, the American Diabetes Association suggests an A1C of <7%.

Blood glucose

Also called blood sugar, it is the main sugar found in the blood and the body's main source of energy. The amount of glucose or sugar in a given amount of blood is called blood glucose level.

Blood glucose meter

A blood glucose meter measures and displays the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood. There are different types of meters, so it is important to read and understand the instructions before taking the test.



Blood glucose monitoring

Checking blood glucose or sugar level in order to manage diabetes is called blood glucose monitoring. Results from regular monitoring can be used to determine adjustments in treatment and lifestyle choices.

TYPE 2 DIABETES AND BLOOD SUGAR¹⁻³ (CONT'D)

Fasting blood glucose test

Used to diagnose prediabetes and diabetes as well as to monitor people with diabetes, it is a test that measures the blood sugar level after a person has not eaten for 8 to 12 hours (usually overnight).

Hyperglycemia

Also called excessive blood glucose, hyperglycemia is blood sugar above a desirable level. Talk to your doctor or other members of your type 2 diabetes care team if your blood sugar is high.

Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia is a condition that may occur when blood sugar levels are lower than normal. Symptoms can include hunger, nervousness, shakiness, perspiration, dizziness or lightheadedness, sleepiness, and confusion. Talk to your doctor or other members of your type 2 diabetes care team if your blood sugar is low.

Insulin

Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas that helps the body use sugar for energy. When the body cannot make enough insulin, it is taken by injection or through use of an insulin pump.



Insulin resistance

The inadequate ability to respond to and use insulin produced in the body. May be linked to obesity, high blood pressure, and high levels of fat in the blood.

Type 2 diabetes

Characterized by high blood sugar levels due to a lack of insulin or the body's inadequate ability to use insulin efficiently, type 2 diabetes develops most in middle-aged and older adults but can appear in young people.

POSSIBLE TYPE 2 DIABETES COMPLICATIONS AND CONCERNS¹⁻²

Complications of poorly controlled type 2 diabetes may include damage to the eyes, heart, blood vessels, nervous system, teeth and gums, feet and skin, or kidneys.² Although these complications are not exclusively related to diabetes, they occur more often in people with type 2 diabetes.



Blood pressure

The force of blood flow inside your blood vessels is called blood pressure. Blood pressure is recorded as a ratio; for example, a healthy level of blood pressure is considered 120/80 mm Hg. The first number represents the systolic pressure, or the pressure when the heart pushes blood through your blood vessels. The second number represents the diastolic pressure, or the pressure in your blood vessels when the heart relaxes between beats. If blood pressure is high, it's called hypertension. *See also hypertension.*

Blood vessels

Blood vessels are tubes that carry blood to and from all parts of the body. The 3 main types of blood vessels include arteries, capillaries, and veins.

Coronary heart disease

Coronary heart disease is caused by the narrowing of the blood vessels that supply blood to the heart. A heart attack results from the blood supply being cut off to the heart.

POSSIBLE TYPE 2 DIABETES COMPLICATIONS AND CONCERNS¹⁻² (CONT'D)

Dialysis

When the kidneys are failing, the blood must be cleaned through an artificial process called dialysis, which is done using special equipment. *See also kidney failure.*

Hypertension

Also called high blood pressure, hypertension is a condition present when blood flows through the blood vessels with a force greater than normal. Having diabetes and high blood pressure can put strain on the heart, damaging blood vessels and increasing the risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney problems, and death.



Kidney failure

Chronic condition in which the kidneys no longer work as they should; the body begins to retain fluid and harmful wastes. A person with kidney failure needs dialysis or a kidney transplant to regain normal function. *See also dialysis.*

Peripheral neuropathy

Neuropathy is a disease of the nervous system, and peripheral neuropathy is the most common form of neuropathy. It affects the feet, legs, or hands, causing pain, numbness, or a tingling sensation.

Stroke

A condition caused by damage to blood vessels in the brain, stroke may cause loss of ability to speak or move parts of the body.

TYPE 2 DIABETES: DIET AND WEIGHT¹⁻²

Body mass index (BMI)

A measure of how much a person weighs compared to his or her height, BMI is used to estimate how much body fat a person has and whether a person is underweight, a normal weight, overweight, or obese.

Carbohydrate

Representing one of the 3 main nutrients in food, carbohydrates are found in starches, vegetables, fruits, dairy products, and sugars.

Cholesterol

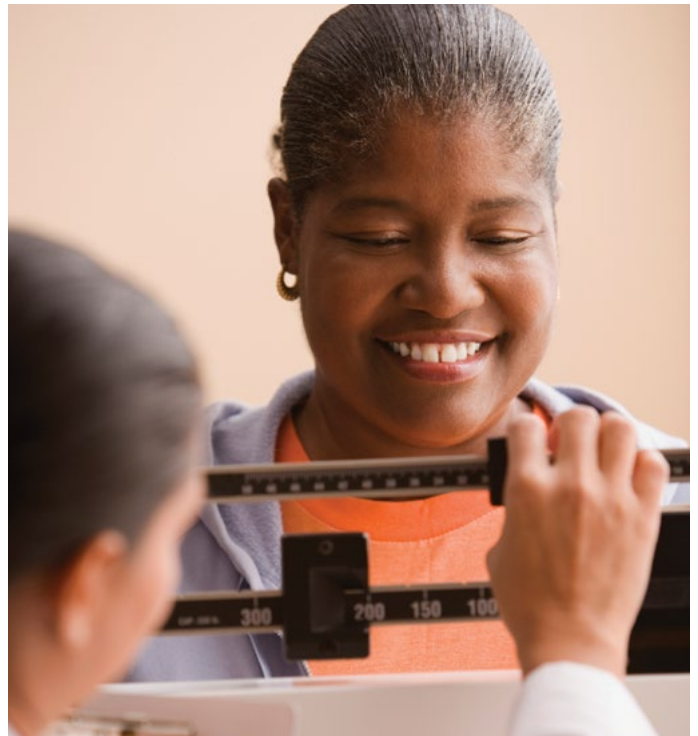
Cholesterol is a type of fat produced by the liver found in the blood and in some foods. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol can help protect the heart. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) and triglycerides can raise the risk of serious problems, such as buildup of cholesterol in the arteries, possibly leading to heart attack and stroke.

Fat

Representing one of the 3 main nutrients in food, fats can be found in butter, margarine, salad dressing, oil, nuts, meat, poultry, fish, and some dairy products.

Glycemic index

The glycemic index is a ranking of foods containing carbohydrates based on the food's effect on blood sugar compared with a standard reference food. For more information, visit the American Diabetes Association website at <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/what-can-i-eat/understanding-carbohydrates/glycemic-index-and-diabetes.html>.



Obesity

Obesity is a condition in which there is a greater-than-normal amount of fat in the body. It is more severe than being overweight and is defined as having a BMI of 30 and above. See *also* BMI.

Overweight

An above-normal body weight is considered overweight. Being overweight is defined as having a BMI of 25 to 29.9.

Protein

Protein is one of the 3 main nutrients in food and can be found in meat, poultry, fish, cheese, milk, dairy products, eggs, and dried beans.

TYPE 2 DIABETES: FOOT AND SKIN CARE¹⁻²

Athlete's foot

Athlete's foot is a fungal infection that occurs on the skin of the foot; it is common in people with type 2 diabetes. Symptoms may include peeling, cracking, or bleeding of the skin as well as pain. Some people with type 2 diabetes have no symptoms and may not know they have an infection.

Bunion

A bunion is a bulge on the first joint of the big toe. It is caused by swelling of a fluid sac under the skin, becoming red, sore, and infected.

Callus

A small area of skin, oftentimes on the bottom of the foot, a callus becomes thick and hard from rubbing or pressure.

Candida

Candida is a fungus that is found naturally in the body. People with diabetes are at a greater risk to have overgrowth due to increased sugar in the body and a weakened immune system. It can lead to infection, causing itching, skin lesions, or rash. Common areas of infection include the mouth, armpits, groin, vagina, and nails.



TYPE 2 DIABETES: EYE AND DENTAL CARE^{1,2,4}

Background retinopathy

A type of damage to the retina (back lining of the eye) marked by bleeding, fluid accumulation, and abnormal dilation of the blood vessels, background retinopathy is an early stage of diabetic retinopathy in patients with type 2 diabetes.

Diabetic retinopathy

Also called diabetic eye disease, this type of retinopathy caused by type 2 diabetes can damage small blood vessels in the retina, resulting in loss of vision.

Cataract

A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is an eye condition that causes an increase in fluid pressure inside the eye, which may lead to loss of vision.



Gingivitis

Gingivitis is a condition of the gums that can cause inflammation and bleeding.

Periodontal disease

Disease of the gums is called periodontal disease. Patients with type 2 diabetes are at increased risk for gum disease.

References: **1.** American Diabetes Association. Common terms. <https://www.diabetes.org/resources/for-students/common-terms>. Accessed August 31, 2020. **2.** National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse. *The Diabetes Dictionary*. Bethesda, MD: National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse; 2009. **3.** American Diabetes Association. Understanding A1C: A1C does it all. <https://www.diabetes.org/a1c>. Accessed June 29, 2020. **4.** U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Blood Glucose Monitoring Devices. <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/vitro-diagnostics/blood-glucose-monitoring-devices>. Updated April 4, 2019. Accessed August 31, 2020.