

# WEEKLY WELLNESS



## Diabetes Explained

The month of November highlights diabetes awareness. The purpose is to bring focus to the severity of this disease if left unmanaged. Diabetes is a disease that occurs when the blood glucose (blood sugar) levels become too elevated. We obtain glucose from the foods that we put into our bodies. The pancreas releases a hormone called insulin to assist the glucose into the cells for energy.

Having an excess of glucose in the blood can cause serious issues. It causes damage to the much sensitive areas including eyes, nerves, and kidneys. Diabetes also damages the body's regular functioning, causing heart disease, stroke, and ischemia, which could lead to the removal of a limb.

The way to know if one has diabetes, is to take a blood test. The most commonly used tests are Fasting Plasma Glucose (FPG), Random Plasma Glucose (RPG), and A1c test.

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## Risk-Factors: Are You At Risk?

The risk factors are dependent on the type of diabetes one may have.

**Type 1 Diabetes:** The exact cause of Type 1 Diabetes is still unknown, however there are risk factors that increases one's odds.

**Family history:** If you have a family member with diabetes, that also increases your odds.

**Environmental factors:** people who are exposed to viral illnesses have a greater risk of contracting diabetes.

**Having immune system cells that are damaging:** children of people with Type 1 diabetes are sometimes tested to see if they contain the autoantibodies. If these autoantibodies are found in the blood, this means that the chances of them having type 1 diabetes is higher.

**Type 2 Diabetes:** There are factors that increase one's risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

**Weight:** Having an excess amount of weight raised the risk for diabetes and countless other medical conditions. The body becomes more resistant to insulin when there is an excess amount of adipose (fat) tissue.

**Family History:** The chances of having type 2 diabetes are higher when a parent, or sibling has it.

**Age:** One's risk becomes increased as they reach the age of 45 or older.

**Abnormal Cholesterol Levels:** Those who have low levels of High Density Lipoprotein (HDL) have a greater risk for type 2 diabetes.

**Inactivity:** Not giving your body enough physical activity or movement can increase obesity which increases the risk of type 2 diabetes.

**Abnormal Triglyceride Levels:** Triglycerides are another form of fat which is carried in the blood. Those who have a high level of triglycerides are at risk of type 2 diabetes.







## The Types of Diabetes

There are different categories of diabetes that a person can fall into.

**Type 1 Diabetes:** (Also known as Juvenile Diabetes) This is a type of diabetes where the pancreas does not produce enough insulin. Without enough insulin, blood glucose cannot make its way into the cells for energy and begin to collect into the blood. High blood glucose causes much damage to the body and complicated one's diabetes. Although it can be developed in people of all ages, type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children, teens, and young adults.

**Type 2 Diabetes:** This is the most commonly diagnosed type of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is most often diagnosed in people over the age of 45, however, as the rate of obesity is increasing, more children, teens, and young adults are being diagnosed. In type 2 diabetes, the cells are not responding normally to the insulin that has been released into the blood. This insulin resistance causes the pancreas to produce even more insulin in hopes of getting the cells to respond. This puts the pancreas into overdrive, causing it to not work as efficiently, which in turn allows the blood glucose levels to rise, causing serious issues.

**Gestational Diabetes:** During the stages of pregnancy, the placenta produces and releases hormones to aid in carrying out the pregnancy. These released hormones cause the cells to be more resistant to insulin. To compensate for this resistance, the pancreas works harder to produce and release more insulin, however, sometimes the pancreas cannot keep up. Gestational diabetes develops when this happens, because not enough insulin finds its way into the cells, leaving too much within the blood.

**Pre-Diabetes:** This happens when the blood sugar is higher than normal, however, not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Generally, many people do not experience symptoms of prediabetes, so many are not aware that they have it. Many people who have type 2 diabetes were diagnosed with prediabetes first. With the proper management, it is possible to bring the levels of blood glucose back to normal.

# Taking Care of Business: Preventing and Managing Diabetes

Diabetes can easily become worse when it is not properly treated and controlled. If you are at risk of developing diabetes, taking the time and action can prevent the future diagnosis. Prevention and management is done almost entirely by you. There are many ways to keep up with your body's maintenance.

**Eat healthy meals:** Developing a healthy meal plan helps to keep your weight at bay, which in turn keeps your risk or effects of diabetes low.

**Check blood sugars:** Checking your levels of blood glucose can help you stay on top of this condition.

**Blood pressure and Cholesterol:** Keeping your blood pressure and levels of cholesterol low and near your target is a great way to manage your diabetes. Something as simple as a healthy meal regime can help keep your values at a healthy level.

**Exercise:** Developing an exercise plan helps to keep your weight at bay, which in turn keeps your risk or effects of diabetes low.

**Stress:** Stress is a normal part of everyone's day-to-day, however, it has negative effects on the body, especially to one's diabetes when they are trying to keep it controlled. Ways to curve your stress is to stay physically active, eat healthy choices, getting enough sleep, and trying different relaxation techniques.

**Keep a log:** A great idea to help with managing your diabetes is to keep a diary, or a log. Logging things like your blood pressure, blood sugar levels, workouts, meals, and even moods can be a great way to track your progress.

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## Visit us at:

1130 Upper Hembree Road  
Roswell, GA 30076

(770) 674-6311

[natmedsol.com](http://natmedsol.com)