The Well

November 2026

Diabetes Awareness Month: Prevention & Progress



Type 1 vs. Type 2 Diabetes: What's the Difference?

You might have heard about diabetes and wondered why doctors sometimes call it "Type 1" or "Type 2." While both types affect how your body handles sugar, they're actually quite different conditions. Understanding these differences can help you better understand what people with diabetes experience and why they manage their condition in different ways. Both types are serious, but they have different causes, happen at different times in life and require different treatments.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease, which means your body's immune system attacks and destroys the cells in your pancreas that make insulin. Without these cells, your body can't produce any insulin at all, so sugar builds up in your blood instead of getting into your cells for energy. Type 1 diabetes usually develops in children, teenagers or young adults, though it can happen at any age. There's no known way to prevent Type 1 diabetes, though it can be managed by a healthy lifestyle, managing blood sugar and getting regular health checkups. It also requires daily insulin injections or the use of an insulin pump. Type 1 diabetes is less common and accounts for about 5-10% of all diabetes cases.

Type 2 diabetes is different because your body makes insulin, but your body resists it or fails to produce enough altogether, causing high blood sugar. This type usually develops slowly over many years and typically appears in adults, though more young people are being diagnosed because of rising obesity rates. Unlike Type 1, you can often prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes through healthy lifestyle choices like eating well, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy weight. Many people with Type 2 diabetes can manage their condition with lifestyle changes and oral medications, though some may eventually need insulin. Type 2 is much more common, making up about 90-95% of all diabetes cases.

The key difference you should remember is this: Type 1 is an autoimmune disease you can't prevent, while Type 2 is largely influenced by lifestyle factors and can often be prevented or managed through the choices you make every day.

Source: **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**

The link between diabetes, heart disease and obesity

Diabetes, heart disease and obesity are closely connected in a dangerous cycle that affects millions of people. When you carry extra weight, your body's cells become resistant to insulin, leading to high blood sugar and resulting in Type 2 diabetes. This extra sugar in your blood damages your blood vessels and arteries over time, making them stiff and narrow. This damage forces your heart to work much harder to pump blood through your body, significantly increasing your risk of heart attack, stroke and other heart problems. In fact, adults with diabetes are nearly twice as likely to have heart disease compared to those without.

The good news is that you can break this cycle by maintaining a healthy weight through regular exercise and good nutrition. If you're overweight, losing just 5-10% of your body weight can dramatically lower your risk of developing both diabetes and heart disease. Your heart, blood vessels and entire body work better when you're at a healthy weight, making it one of the most important things you can do to protect your long-term health.

Source: **American Heart Association**

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Lifestyle Changes to Prevent and Manage Diabetes

You have the power to prevent Type 2 diabetes through simple changes in your daily life. Diabetes affects millions of people, but you don't have to become one of them. The choices you make each day about what you eat, how much you move, and how you take care of your body can significantly lower your risk of developing this serious condition. The best part is that these changes don't have to be extreme or impossible — small, consistent steps can make a huge difference in protecting your health for years to come.

Here are the most important lifestyle changes you can make to prevent diabetes:

Healthy Eating Habits:

- Drink water, unsweetened tea or milk instead of soda and sugary drinks.
- Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits at each meal.
- Choose whole grains like brown rice, whole wheat bread and oatmeal instead of white bread and sugary cereals.
- Limit fast food, fried foods and processed snacks.
- Watch your portion size; you don't need to clean your plate every time.

Stay Active:

- Get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- Find activities you enjoy, like dancing, swimming, biking or playing sports.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator whenever you can.
- Walk or bike to places instead of riding in a car.
- Limit your screen time (TV, video games, phone) to no more than 2 hours per day.

Other Important Changes:

- Get 8-10 hours of sleep every night.
- Maintain a healthy weight for your age and height.
- Learn healthy ways to manage stress, like deep breathing or talking to someone you trust.

Source: **American Diabetes Association**

Supporting People Living with Diabetes Through Education and Community Programs

Education and community programs play a vital role in helping people with diabetes live healthier, happier lives. Being diagnosed can feel overwhelming and confusing. The good news is there are plenty of education programs and community resources to help. Diabetes education programs teach the skills you need to manage your condition successfully, like how to check your blood sugar, what foods to eat, how to take your medications properly and how to recognize warning signs of problems.

Community programs bring people with diabetes together, so you don't feel alone. They provide a safe space to share experiences, learn from others facing similar challenges, and get support from people who truly understand what you're going through. Many communities offer free or low-cost programs like diabetes support groups, cooking classes that teach healthy meal preparation, exercise programs designed for people with diabetes and even programs that help people afford their medications and supplies. These programs also educate family members and friends so they can better support their loved ones with diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, people who participate in diabetes education and support programs have better blood sugar control, fewer hospital visits and feel more confident managing their condition. You can support people with diabetes by learning about the disease, being understanding when someone needs to check their blood sugar or take medication, encouraging healthy habits without judgment and spreading awareness about local programs and resources in your community.

Source: **American Diabetes Association**

Chicken Pot Pie with Phyllo



There is nothing more comforting than chicken and veggies in a lusciously thick sauce topped with a flaky crust. This diabetes-friendly take on the classic dish provides a comforting, but healthy, meal.

Makes 12 servings.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast (chopped into pieces)
- 1 ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 dash black pepper
- 2 cups low sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup water
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 10 ounces cremini mushrooms
- 1 clove garlic (finely chopped)
- 1 pinch kosher salt
- 1 pound red potatoes (cut into quarters)
- 5 sprigs fresh thyme
- 3 medium carrots (diced into ½ inch pieces)
- 1 large onion (diced)
- 1½ cup milk
- ½ cup half-and-half
- 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 8 ounces frozen peas
- ½ cup parsley
- 8 whole sheets of frozen phyllo dough

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Season the diced chicken with garlic powder and freshly ground pepper; set aside. In a 2-quart saucepan, bring the chicken stock and water to a boil.
2. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a medium skillet and add the mushrooms and garlic. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Cook for 5 minutes or until mushrooms are soft. Once the mushrooms soften, set them aside in a bowl. Strain any liquid from the mushrooms.
3. Add in the potatoes and thyme leaves and lower the heat to medium. Simmer the potatoes for about 8 minutes until tender. With a slotted spoon, remove the potatoes and thyme into a bowl. Discard the thyme leaves. Add the carrots and onions to the stock and simmer for 4 minutes. With a slotted spoon remove the carrots and onions to the same bowl as the potatoes.
4. Add the chicken to the stock and simmer the chicken for 3 minutes. With a slotted spoon, remove the chicken into the same bowl with the vegetables. Reduce the stock until reduced to ½ cup, about 10 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, whisk the milk, half-and-half, and flour together in a bowl until very smooth. When the stock is reduced, slowly add the milk mixture to the stock, constantly stirring until thickened, but smooth. Add the sauce to the vegetables and season with salt and pepper. Add in the reserved mushrooms, peas and parsley, and mix well.
6. Pour the mixture into a 9x13-inch pan. Set aside.
7. Spread one sheet of phyllo out onto a very lightly floured surface. Be sure to cover the remaining sheets of phyllo with a towel to avoid exposing to air. The phyllo will crack if exposed. Coat with a butter spray. Add another sheet of phyllo on top of the first sheet and coat with spray. Repeat this process until all 8 sheets are used.
8. Carefully lift the phyllo dough stack and place over the chicken vegetable filling. Tuck the edges under. With a sharp knife, make 3 diagonal slashes across the top of the dough. This will allow steam to escape.
9. Bake the chicken pot pie, uncovered, for about 30 minutes until the top is puffed and golden brown. Remove from the oven and let stand for about 5 minutes. Cut into squares.

NUTRITION INFORMATION	
Calories per serving	**190**
Sodium	220mg
Fat	3g
Saturated Fat	1g
Carbohydrates	26g
Protein	14g
Total Sugars	5g

Source: **American Diabetes Association Food Hub**

Understanding Diabetes: What You Need to Know



Diabetes is a health condition that affects how your body uses sugar for energy. When you eat food, your body breaks it down into sugar (also called glucose) that goes into your bloodstream. Your pancreas makes a hormone called insulin that helps move sugar from your blood into your cells where it can be used for energy. In people with diabetes, this process doesn't work properly. Either your body doesn't make enough insulin, or your cells don't respond to insulin the way they should. This causes sugar to build up in your blood, which can lead to serious health problems over time like heart disease, vision problems and kidney damage.

The good news is that Type 2 diabetes, the most common form, can often be prevented through healthy lifestyle choices. You can make a big difference in reducing your risk of developing diabetes by eating a balanced diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grains while limiting sugary drinks and processed foods. Regular physical activity and maintaining a healthy weight are also crucial. Even small changes that you make, like choosing water instead of soda or taking the stairs instead of the elevator, add up over time.

Many people don't realize they have diabetes or are at risk until serious problems develop, so being aware of warning signs — like feeling very thirsty, needing to urinate frequently, feeling more tired than usual, having blurry vision or cuts and bruises that heal slowly — is important. If you notice any of these symptoms, make sure you talk to a doctor right away. Regular check-ups can catch diabetes early when it's easier to manage. Remember, taking care of your health now sets you up for a healthier future. By making smart food choices, staying active and knowing the warning signs, you can prevent diabetes and keep yourself healthy.

Sources:

American Diabetes Association

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LIVING WITH DIABETES

Diabetes causes more deaths per year than breast cancer and AIDS combined. Effectively managing diabetes not only improves your health but also reduces the risk of severe complications.
Learn more: diabetes.org

NATIONAL CAREGIVERS MONTH

Whether you are a primary caregiver, participate in decision-making, or simply care about a person who needs caregiver support, find the resources you need today.
Learn more: alz.org/events/nadam

GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT NOVEMBER 19

Quitting smoking is an important step to living a healthier life. The Great American Smokeout is the day you start your journey to a smoke-free life.
Learn more: cancer.org/cancer/risk-prevention/tobacco

HEALTH LITERACY

Health literacy refers to your ability to find, understand and use information to make health-related decisions for yourself and others.
Learn more: cdc.gov/health-literacy

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
1	2	Election Day 3	4	5	6	7
Diwali 8	9	10	Veterans Day 11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	Thanksgiving 26	27	28
29	30					

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