

Editorial Note on Alternative & Integrative Medicine – Diabetes

Suman Bala Sharma*

Department of Biochemistry, University College of Medical Sciences, University of Delhi, India

Introduction

Diabetes is a disease that occurs when your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. Blood glucose is your main source of energy and comes from the food you eat. Insulin, a hormone made by the pancreas, helps glucose from food get into your cells to be used for energy. Sometimes your body doesn't make enough—or any—insulin or doesn't use insulin well. Glucose then stays in your blood and doesn't reach your cells.

Over time, having too much glucose in your blood can cause health problems. Although diabetes has no cure, you can take steps to manage your diabetes and stay healthy. Sometimes people call diabetes “a touch of sugar” or “borderline diabetes.” These terms suggest that someone doesn't really have diabetes or has a less serious case, but every case of diabetes is serious.

The most common types of diabetes are type 1, type 2, and gestational diabetes.

Type 1 Diabetes

If you have type 1 diabetes, your body does not make insulin. Your immune system attacks and destroys the cells in your pancreas that make insulin. Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in children and young adults, although it can appear at any age. People with type 1 diabetes need to take insulin every day to stay alive.

Type 2 Diabetes

If you have type 2 diabetes, your body does not make or use insulin well. You can develop type 2 diabetes at any age, even during childhood. However, this type of diabetes occurs most often in middle-aged and older people. Type 2 is the most common type of diabetes.

Gestational Diabetes

Gestational diabetes develops in some women when they are pregnant. Most of the time, this type of diabetes goes away after the baby is born. However, if you've had gestational diabetes, you have a greater chance of developing type 2 diabetes later in life. Sometimes diabetes diagnosed during pregnancy is actually type 2 diabetes.

Less common types include monogenic diabetes, which is an inherited form of diabetes, and cystic fibrosis-related diabetes.

As of 2015, 30.3 million people in the United States, or 9.4 percent of the population, had diabetes. More than 1 in 4 of them didn't know they had the disease. Diabetes affects 1 in 4 people over the age of 65. About 90-95 percent of cases in adults are type 2 diabetes.

You are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if you are age 45 or older, have a family history of diabetes, or are overweight. Physical inactivity, race, and certain health problems such as high blood pressure also affect your chance of developing type 2 diabetes. You are also more likely to develop type 2 diabetes if you have prediabetes or had gestational diabetes when you were pregnant. Learn more about risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

Over time, high blood glucose leads to problems such as

- Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Kidney Disease
- Eye Problems
- Dental Disease
- Nerve Damage
- Foot Problems

The WHO "Global report on diabetes" provides an overview of the diabetes burden, interventions available to prevent and manage diabetes, and recommendations for governments, individuals, the civil society and the private sector.

The WHO "Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health" complements WHO's diabetes work by focusing on population-wide approaches to promote healthy diet and regular physical activity, thereby reducing the growing global problem of overweight and obesity.

The WHO module on diagnosis and management of type 2 diabetes brings together guidance on diagnosis, classification and management of type 2 diabetes in one document. The module will be useful to policy makers who plan service delivery of diabetes care, national programme managers responsible for training, planning and monitoring service delivery, and facility managers and primary care staff involved in clinical care and monitoring processes and outcomes of diabetes care.

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*Address for Correspondence: Suman Bala Sharma, Director-Professor
Department of Biochemistry, University College of Medical Sciences, University of Delhi, India, Tel: 09818561119; E-mail: drsbs@hotmail.com

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