



TYPE 2 and YOU

Tips for better understanding your diabetes

What You Can Learn From This Handout...

- what causes type 2 diabetes
- how it can affect you
- why medicines may be needed to treat diabetes

TYPE 2 DIABETES—A CONTINUOUS DISEASE

When you are first diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, you might think that it just showed up in your body, like a cold or flu. But type 2 diabetes is different. By the time you begin noticing symptoms, you may have already had diabetes for as long as 10 years. That's because diabetes starts slowly and quietly, over time, with what is called insulin resistance.

What Is Insulin Resistance?

Insulin resistance is when your body does not use its own insulin as well as it used to do. Insulin helps to keep the correct balance of glucose in the bloodstream. When you eat a meal, insulin helps to move glucose from the bloodstream into the muscles and body fat, where it's turned into energy. Insulin also tells your liver to make less glucose for your body. When you have insulin resistance, it takes more insulin to make all this happen.

Can't My Body Just Make More Insulin?

Insulin is made by the pancreas. People without diabetes are able to make enough insulin to keep up with the demand. But for people with type 2 diabetes, their pancreas just can't make enough insulin to keep up with rising insulin resistance.

Why Do I Need To Keep My Blood Glucose In A Certain Range?

Even though you may feel fine, if your blood glucose gets too high it can damage your heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.

What Kind Of Diabetes Medicines Will My Doctor Give Me?

There are different kinds of diabetes medicines to help keep your blood glucose balanced. Some medicines help your body to make more insulin, some keep your body from making more glucose than it needs, and some help your body to remove extra glucose. Some medicines are insulin substitutes that work like insulin, and others help your own insulin to work better. You and your healthcare provider will decide what medicines work best for you.

Health information is not clear at times. The Ask Me 3[®] program run by the National Patient Safety Foundation can help. The program gives you three questions to ask your healthcare provider during a health care visit, either for yourself or for a loved one. They are:

- **What is my main problem?**
- **What do I need to do?**
- **Why is it important for me to do this?**

Asking questions can help you be an active member of your health care team.

For more information on Ask Me 3[®], please visit www.npsf.org/askme3.

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Why Does My Doctor Give Me More Than One Diabetes Medicine?

Almost everyone with type 2 diabetes needs medicine to help them reach their blood glucose targets. Having to take more diabetes medicines or insulin does not mean that you're doing something wrong. It means your pancreas is making less insulin over time, so it needs more help.

How Will I Know If My Treatment Is Working?

Checking your blood glucose before and after meals and keeping track of your A1C results are the best ways for you to know if your treatment is working.

