

## November is Diabetes Action Month

North Taranaki Midweek · 8 Nov 2023 · 12 · To find out more, visit [www.diabetes.org.nz](http://www.diabetes.org.nz)

Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs when the pancreas is no longer able to make insulin, or when the body cannot make good use of the insulin it produces.

The pancreas is a vital organ that has both digestive and hormonal functions. Insulin is a hormone made by the pancreas, that acts like a key to let glucose from the food we eat pass from the blood stream into the cells in the body to produce energy.

Not being able to produce insulin or use it effectively leads to raised glucose levels in the blood (known as hyperglycaemia). Over the long-term, high glucose levels are associated with damage to the body and failure of various organs and tissues. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. For many people (but not all) it can be prevented by following a healthy lifestyle.

While Type 2 diabetes cannot be cured, it can be managed and people with Type 2 diabetes can, and do, live active and healthy lives.

### WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO DEVELOP TYPE 2 DIABETES?

Type 2 diabetes most often occurs in adulthood usually after the ages of 30 – 40 years. However, increasing numbers of teenagers and children are developing Type 2 diabetes.

You are more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes if you are European aged 40 years or older; and of Māori, Asian, Middle Eastern or Pacific Island descent aged 30 years or older.

You are also at risk if you have diabetes in your family (grandparents, parents, brothers or sisters); have high blood pressure; and are overweight (especially if you carry most of your weight around your waist).

### SYMPTOMS OF TYPE 2 DIABETES

You may have had Type 2 diabetes for many years without realising it. Not everyone has symptoms. Symptoms may include:

- Feeling tired and lacking energy
- Feeling thirsty
- Going to the toilet often
- Getting infections frequently

Getting infections which are hard to heal

- Poor eyesight or blurred vision
- Often feeling hungry

If you have any of the above symptoms, discuss these with your doctor.

Of all the people with diabetes it is estimated that about 10% of them have Type 1 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes most often occurs in childhood, often in children aged 7 – 12 years.

However, it can occur at any age – from tiny babies to very old people.

### SYMPTOMS OF TYPE 1 DIABETES

- Thirst
- Passing more urine
- Weight loss
- Very tired
- Mood changes
- Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting
- Skin infections, thrush
- Extreme hunger
- Poor concentration and performance

### DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Diabetes is diagnosed by blood tests which can be organised through your doctor. If you are very unwell you should seek medical assistance immediately.