

# **DIABETES TYPE 2 IN KIDS**

Type 2 Diabetes is a growing problem in young people. Until a few years ago, type 2 diabetes used to be called adult-onset diabetes because it was commonly diagnosed in people over age 45. Now, about one-third of American youth are overweight, a problem closely related to the increase in kids with type 2 diabetes, some as young as 10 years old.

According to the U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in three American children born after 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime.

## Type 2 diabetes affects the way the body is able to use sugar (glucose) for energy.

- The body turns the carbohydrates in food into glucose, the basic fuel for the body's cells.
- The pancreas makes insulin, a hormone that moves glucose from the blood to the cells.
- In type 2 diabetes, the body's cells resist the effects of insulin, and blood glucose levels rise.
- Over time, glucose reaches dangerously high levels in the blood, which is called hyperglycemia.
- Hyperglycemia can lead to health problems like heart disease, blindness, and kidney failure.

### **Risks Factors**

Researchers do not completely understand why some people develop type 2 diabetes and others do not; however, the following risk factors are associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes in children:

- **Being overweight**. The single greatest risk factor for type 2 diabetes in children is excess weight. In the U.S., almost one out of every five children is overweight. The chances are more than double that an overweight child will develop diabetes.
- **Family history of diabetes**. Many affected children and youth have at least one parent with diabetes or have a significant family history of the disease.
- **Inactivity**. Being inactive further reduces the body's ability to respond to insulin.
- **Specific racial/ethnic groups**. Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, or Asian/Pacific Islanders are more prone than other ethnic groups to develop type 2 diabetes.
- **Puberty**. Young people in puberty are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes than younger children, probably because of normal rises in hormone levels that can cause insulin resistance during this stage of rapid growth and physical development.

## Warning Signs and Symptoms Associated with Type 2 Diabetes

Warning signs and symptoms of type 2 diabetes in children develop slowly, and initially, there may be no symptoms. However, not everyone with insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes develops these warning signs, and not everyone who has these symptoms necessarily has type 2 diabetes.

- Increased hunger, even after eatingUnexplained weight loss
- Increased thirst, dry mouth, and frequent urination
- Feeling very tired
- Blurred vision
- Slow healing of sores or cuts
- Dark velvety or ridged patches of skin, especially on the back of the neck or under the arms
- Irregular periods, no periods, and/or excess facial and body hair growth in girls
- High blood pressure or abnormal blood fats levels

If your child is overweight and has any two of the risk factors listed above, talk to your doctor about getting his or her blood sugar tested. Testing typically begins at 10 years old or when puberty starts, whichever is first, and is repeated every 3 years.

## **Preventive Actions**

Healthy lifestyle choices can help prevent and treat type 2 diabetes. Even with a family history of diabetes, eating healthy foods in the correct amounts and exercising regularly can help children achieve or maintain a normal weight and normal blood glucose levels. Here are some ideas to reduce the risk of becoming overweight.

### • Eat healthy foods.

- Eat foods low in fat and calories.
- Drink more water and fewer sugary drinks.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables.
- Eat slowly—it takes at least 20 minutes to start feeling full.
- Reward kids with praise instead of food.

### • Get more physical activity.

- Increase physical activity to at least 60 minutes every day.
- Keep it positive—focus on progress.
- Encourage kids to join a sports team.
- Take walks together
- Limit screen time to 2 hours a day.

Young kids and teens are still growing, so if they're overweight the goal is to slow down weight gain while allowing normal growth and development. Don't put them on a weight loss diet without talking to their doctor.

For more information visit <u>https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevent-type-2/type-2-kids.html</u> or talk to your child's doctor.