

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes



Know your risk

There are various risk factors for diabetes. Keep in mind that if you have any of the risk factors outlined in the chart below, it doesn't mean you will certainly develop type 2 diabetes. However, ignoring these risk factors — especially given the rise in type 2 diabetes around the world — exposes you to potentially devastating complications.

We can't recommend strongly enough that you know your risk factors, symptoms and blood glucose numbers.

Based on the chart below, we advise you to review and check off all the risk factors that apply to you.¹ Bring this chart with you to your next visit with your healthcare provider to start a discussion about what you can do to reduce some of these risk factors.

Risk factors ¹	Does this risk apply to you?
You have a family history of type 2 diabetes particularly a mother, father, sister or brother.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
You are overweight. Being overweight or obese is a main risk factor. For more information about how your healthcare physician might evaluate excess weight, see the next page.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Fat distribution. Storing fat mainly in your abdomen, rather than your hips or thighs indicates a greater risk. Your risk for type 2 diabetes rises if you're a man with a waist circumference above 40 inches (116 centimeters) or a woman with a measurement above 35 inches (88.9 centimeters).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Race. Although it's unclear why, people of certain races, including African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders are at higher risk.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Age. Your risk increases as you get older, especially after 45.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Inadequate physical activity, which means you do not have a regular routine of moderate/brisk aerobic exercise at least three times a week for at least 30 minutes. Physical activity helps control your weight, uses up glucose as energy and makes your cells more sensitive to insulin.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Risk factors ¹	Does this risk apply to you?
HDL (“good”) cholesterol of less than 35 mg/dL (0.9 mmol/L) and/or triglyceride level of greater than 250 mg/dL (2.8 mmol/L). If you don’t know your cholesterol numbers, ask your healthcare provider to check at your next appointment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Pregnancy-related risks. Your risk increases if you developed gestational diabetes when you were pregnant or if you give birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds (4 kilograms).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
A diagnosis of prediabetes, a condition in which your blood glucose level is higher than normal, but not high enough to be classified as diabetes. Left untreated, prediabetes often progresses to type 2 diabetes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Polycystic ovary syndrome. Having this condition, characterized by irregular menstrual periods, excess hair growth and obesity, increases your risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Areas of darkened skin, usually in the armpits and neck. This condition often indicates insulin resistance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Weight and diabetes

Not all people who are overweight develop type 2 diabetes, and not all people who maintain a healthy weight are immune from developing it. But weight has been identified as a high-risk factor, so being overweight may put you at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Why does weight matter? It’s actually fat that’s the culprit, because fat is resistant to insulin, which is the hormone that helps regulate the delivery of glucose to cells. If you are overweight, losing as little as seven percent of your current weight can make a big difference with diabetes prevention.² Consult your healthcare provider to determine healthy weight for you.

Sources:

1. Mayo Clinic. Type 2 Diabetes, January 20, 2021. Available from www.mayoclinic.org.

2. American Diabetes Association. Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes - 2022, *Diabetes Care*, January 2022. Available from www.diabetes.org.

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