

number one diabetes risk factor: obesity

Staying healthy and active can prevent type 2 diabetes



DR. LAMONT WEIDE

When most people think about Type 2 diabetes, they imagine people getting sick because they consume too much sweets. That’s not really the case. “Everybody thinks it’s about consuming too much sugar, but the reality is diabetics can’t use sugar where they need it,” says Dr. Lamont Weide, chief of diabetes and endocrinology at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Medical School. “They may make it and make more than a normal person, but they can’t make enough to overcome their resistance, which is usually caused by obesity.”

The number one risk factor for diabetes is obesity. There are other factors, but weight is one of the biggest predictors of whether or not someone will have this chronic condition.

“If you are overweight, your risk is more than 10 times what it would be if you were a healthy weight,” says Dr. David Robbins, an endocrinologist and director of the Diabetes Institute at The University of Kansas Hospital.

Type 2 diabetes is often a preventable condition. Watching your weight and staying active can help dramatically reduce your chances of getting a diabetes diagnosis.



DR. DAVID ROBBINS

WHAT IT IS?

There are three main types of diabetes, gestational, type 1 and type 2. All three revolve around the body’s inability to produce or properly use insulin (a hormone that turns the sugar we consume into energy).

Gestational diabetes occurs during pregnancy, when a woman’s hormones inhibit her ability to use insulin properly. According to the American Diabetes Association, about 18 percent of women will be impacted by the condition, which typically goes away post-pregnancy.

Type 1 diabetes accounts for about 5 to 10 percent of total diabetes cases. Also known as juvenile diabetes, it is an autoimmune disorder in which the body doesn’t produce insulin.

By far, the most widely diagnosed form of diabetes is type 2 diabetes. It accounts for upwards of 90 percent of total cases and is now found in people of all ages. In this type, the body either does not produce the necessary insulin or the body’s cells can’t use it properly. When the sugar isn’t used, it builds up in the blood instead of the cells.

ARE YOU AT RISK?

Aside from obesity, there are a handful of risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Two of these are age and genetics. The risk of diabetes tends to increase after the age of 45 because, as we age, we produce less insulin. The condition is also more likely to occur in people who are African American, Hispanic or American Indian.

Symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination, thirst, sores that don’t heal

{story by} TAMMY WORTH

Diabetes rears its head in many forms, but most individuals do not accurately understand the different types. Type 1 diabetes accounts for 5 to 10 percent of diabetes cases, and it is often found in young people. Whereas, Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90 percent of diabetes cases.

