

## For More Information

### Inova Diabetes Center

Visit or call an **Inova Diabetes Center** near you to learn more about staying safe with diabetes. [www.inova.org/diabetes](http://www.inova.org/diabetes)

Services include: Type 2 Basics, Gestational and Preventing Diabetes Classes. Individual appointments are available for insulin training, type 1 care and pump skills with Certified Diabetes Educators (Registered Nurses and Registered Dietitians).

### Other Diabetes Organizations:

**National Diabetes Education Program:** [www.ndep.gov](http://www.ndep.gov)

**American Dietetic Association:** [www.aade.org](http://www.aade.org)

**American Diabetes Association:** [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

**Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation:** [www.jdrf.org](http://www.jdrf.org)

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Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit healthcare system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services, including emergency- and urgent-care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health and blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community it serves through excellence in patient care, education and research. Inova provides a healthy environment for its patients, families, visitors, staff and physicians by prohibiting tobacco use on its campuses.



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## For Your Health

### November is Diabetes Month

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starch, and other food into energy needed for daily life.

The cause of diabetes is a mystery, however both genetics and environmental factors appear to play roles. Type 1 diabetes develops most often in children and young adults, yet the disease can be diagnosed at any age.

The causes of type 1 diabetes are complex and still not completely understood. People with type 1 diabetes are thought to have an inherited, or genetic, predisposition to the disease. Researchers believe that this genetic predisposition may remain dormant until it is activated by an environmental trigger or triggers such as a virus or a chemical. This starts an attack of the immune system that results in the eventual destruction of the beta cells of the pancreas.

Type 2 diabetes is more common in adults aged 50 and older, however it is being diagnosed now in children and adolescents. Being overweight or obese and leading a non-active lifestyle are major risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes. Another risk factor is having a family history of the disease. Being African American, American Indian, Asian American, Latino and Pacific Islanders increases the likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes.

Not everyone with type 2 diabetes has symptoms, particularly in the early stages of the disease.

In fact, 5.7 million of the 23.6 million people with diabetes are unaware that they even have the disease. Of those, 90 to 95% have type 2 diabetes.

## Knowledge is Power!

Frequently asked questions about diabetes

### My mom has diabetes. Should I be worried?

Diabetes tends to run in families. If you have a parent or a sibling with type 2 diabetes, you run a greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes than someone who doesn't have family members with the disease. If you haven't already started, it would be wise to exercise and eat a healthy diet.

### So, is there a way to avoid diabetes?

Research has shown that daily exercise, which adds up to *at least* 150 minutes each week, and controlling how much food is eaten, prevented or postponed diabetes in 58% of the people studied. That's a lot of people!

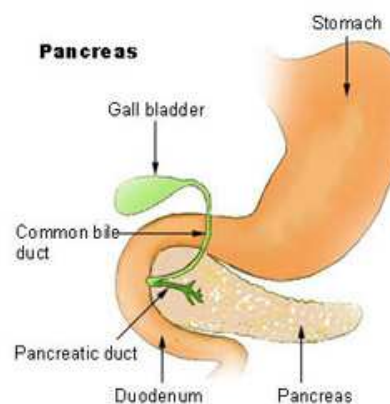
### If I have diabetes, what foods should I avoid eating?

There are no foods that you need to avoid. We used to think sugars were digested more quickly than other forms of carbohydrate. Research shows that is not true. When you have diabetes, you need to be careful how much you eat, and it's best to spread your energy foods, called carbohydrates, through the entire day, so that your body can use them without being overwhelmed.

### If I get diabetes, am I also going to get kidney disease or go blind?

Not necessarily. Well-managed diabetes doesn't cause anything. We know from long term studies that people with diabetes do not develop complications if they keep their blood sugars in a healthy target range. If you would like to learn how to do this, please call us to sign up for a class (703.750.8800). The Inova Diabetes Centers are in Loudoun, Fair Oaks, Fairfax and Alexandria Hospitals. You can find us at: <http://www.inova.org/healthcare-services/diabetes/index.jsp>

## Understanding the Role of the Pancreas



Diabetes is the result of a deficiency of insulin, which is found in the endocrine tissue of the pancreas. In type 1 diabetes, the pancreas cannot produce insulin. Type 2 diabetes usually begins with a condition called insulin resistance; the pancreas can produce insulin but the cells do not respond to it. Over time, insulin production

declines as well, so many people with type 2 diabetes eventually need to take insulin.

## Type 2 Symptoms

- Excessive thirst
- Frequent urination
- Extreme hunger
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fatigue, or a feeling of being "run down" and tired
- Rapid breathing
- Blurred vision
- Dry, itchy skin
- Headache
- Tingling or burning pain in the feet, legs, hands, or other parts of the body
- High blood pressure
- Mood swings
- Irritability, depression
- Frequent or recurring infections, such as urinary tract infections, yeast infections and skin infections
- Slow healing of cuts and bruises