

Understanding Diabetes

Diabetes is a common condition. More than half a million adults in Louisiana have diabetes and 32,000 more will be diagnosed each year. Although diabetes is a lifelong condition, you can take steps to manage it and prevent serious medical problems.

There are two main types of diabetes

TYPE 1

Type 1 diabetes is when the pancreas stops making insulin, a hormone that helps turn food into energy. People with type 1 diabetes need insulin injections to survive.



TYPE 2

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of the condition. It happens when the body doesn't properly use the insulin it makes. People with type 2 diabetes may need insulin injections to control blood sugar and stay healthy.

Watch for These Warning Signs:

- Increased thirst, hunger and urination
- Tiredness
- Eating more and losing weight
- Sores or cuts that don't heal
- Blurred vision
- Tingling or loss of feeling in hands or feet



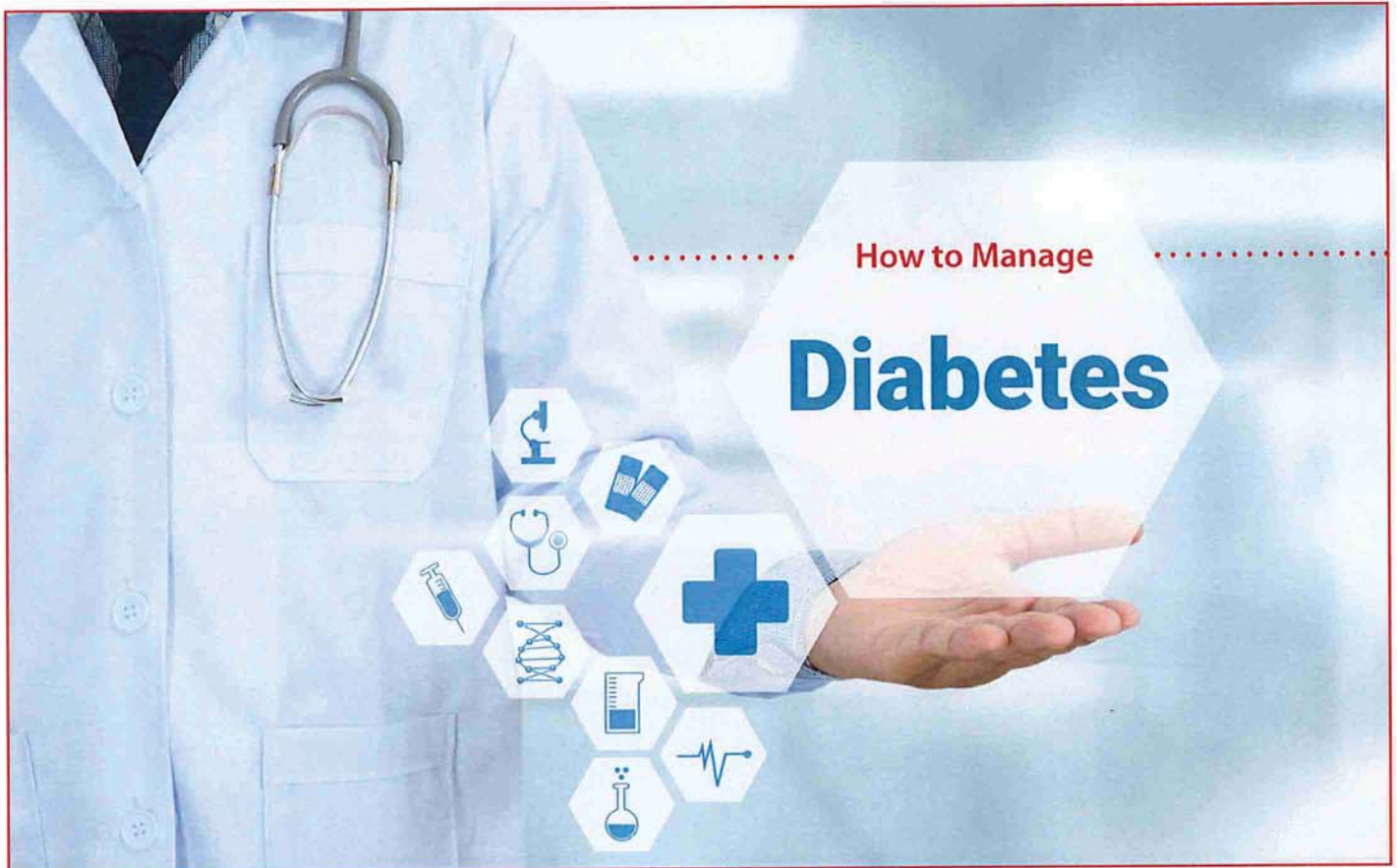
Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes:

- Prediabetes
- Overweight or obese
- Older than age 45
- Family history of the disease
- Diabetes during pregnancy
- Physically active less than three times per week
- Being African-American, Hispanic or Latin American, American Indian, Pacific Islander, or Asian American

Some people with type 2 diabetes don't have any symptoms, so it's important to talk with your doctor about your health history and risk factors.

What is prediabetes?

Prediabetes is when blood sugar levels are higher than normal but lower than the levels classified as having diabetes. Having prediabetes puts you at greater risk for developing diabetes and is a warning sign of your risk. To avoid diabetes, you would need to act immediately to work with your doctor on lifestyle changes. Diabetes is only treatable, but prediabetes is curable.



Lifestyle changes to prevent diabetes include having a healthy weight, staying active, eating a balanced diet and quitting smoking.

Managing diabetes is a lifelong process. Rather than trying to change everything at once, try setting realistic goals and slowly make changes to your health habits. Reach out to family and friends for help, or join a support group. Diabetes education classes can help you learn more about your condition and are a great way to meet like-minded people.

Some goals to set are:

- Educate yourself about your condition
- Eat healthy
- Get active
- Monitor your blood sugar
- Take medications and insulin as prescribed
- See your doctor regularly



You can live a full, active life with diabetes by taking charge of your health. It's up to you!