

Type 2 diabetes

Risk factors and complications

Type 2 diabetes can put you at risk for many life-threatening health problems.

Some risk factors and complications of type 2 diabetes may be more visible and easier to track by your doctor, while others may be **lurking under the surface**.

Risk factor

Obesity

About 80-90% of people with diabetes are overweight or obese, increasing the risk for other health complications such as heart attack and stroke.

Risk factor

Cholesterol

High cholesterol can increase your risk for heart attack and stroke, but there is still a risk even if your LDL ("bad") cholesterol is normal.

Complication

High blood pressure

Added stress from high blood pressure (hypertension) along with diabetes can cause heart, brain, kidney and eye damage.

Complication

Eye damage

Most people with diabetes have some form of eye damage (diabetic retinopathy) that can lead to vision changes or blindness. You can help lower your risk or worsening of eye damage with blood sugar control, regular eye exams and early treatment.

DID YOU KNOW?

Diabetes puts you at greater risk of heart disease and stroke. People with diabetes may develop heart disease 15 years earlier than those without diabetes, and 1 in 2 people with type 2 diabetes die due to heart disease.

Complication

Stroke

A stroke occurs when blood stops flowing to the brain due to a blockage or from a damaged blood vessel. You can help reduce your risk of stroke by paying careful attention to your risk factors and maintaining target levels for blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol.

Complication

Heart attack

A heart attack (myocardial infarction) results from a blockage of blood flow and oxygen to the heart. You can help lower your risk of experiencing one by paying careful attention to your risk factors.

Complication

Kidney disease

A common and chronic condition in people with diabetes (known as nephropathy) where high blood sugar damages the tiny blood vessels in the kidneys over time, causing the kidneys to not work properly or even fail.

Complication

Coronary artery disease (CAD)

The most common form of heart disease in diabetes, CAD, is caused by a narrowing or blockage of the arteries supplying blood to the heart and can result in a heart attack or stroke if the blood supply is cut off.

Complication

Peripheral artery disease (PAD)

People with diabetes have an especially high risk for PAD - a narrowing of the arteries away from the heart that serve the legs, stomach, arms and head - which can increase your risk for CAD, heart attack and stroke.

Proper management of type 2 diabetes may help prevent or delay the onset of diabetes complications