

# Children & Type 2 Diabetes

~ a fat baby is not a healthy baby ~

Type 2 diabetes used to only occur in adults. It's now being diagnosed in children, mostly because of today's obesity epidemic.

Type 2 diabetes is a chronic disease that affects the way the body uses sugar. There's no cure, but there is a lot you can do to manage, or even prevent, the disease. Encourage your child to eat healthy foods, be active, and maintain a healthy weight. If that's not enough, medication may be needed to manage their diabetes.

## Signs & Symptoms

Type 2 diabetes in children often develops slowly. Some don't have any signs or symptoms, while others experience:

- ~ Increased thirst and urination
- ~ Extreme hunger
- ~ Weight loss
- ~ Fatigue
- ~ Blurred vision
- ~ Slow-healing sores or frequent infections

## Risk Factors

It's not completely known why some children develop type 2 diabetes and other do not. However, there are certain factors that increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

- ~ *Weight.* Being overweight is a primary risk factor.
- ~ *Inactivity.* The less active your child is, the greater their risk.
- ~ *Family History.* Risk increases if a parent or sibling has the disease.
- ~ *Race.* It's unclear why, but African American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American children have an increased risk.

## When to Seek Medical Advice

Diabetes screening is recommended for all high-risk children in order to diagnose type 2 diabetes before it does serious damage – even if they have no signs or symptoms. Talk to your child's doctor if you are concerned about diabetes or notice any of the signs or symptoms.

## Screening & Diagnosis

A simple blood test is all that's needed to screen for and diagnose someone with type 2 diabetes.

## Complications of Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes can be easy to ignore in the early stages when your child feels fine. However, it is a serious disease and can affect nearly every major organ in the body (including the heart, blood vessels, nerves, eyes, and kidneys). Controlling blood sugar levels can reduce the risk of complications.

## Treatment

Treatment is a lifelong commitment of monitoring blood sugar levels, eating healthy, exercising regularly, and sometimes taking medication.

Contrary to popular belief, there's no such thing as a diabetes diet. Your child won't be restricted to a lifetime of bland, boring food. Focus instead on lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. In fact, this is the best eating plan for the entire family!

## Prevention

Healthy lifestyle choices can help prevent type 2 diabetes. Encourage your child to eat healthy foods, be physically active, and lose extra weight.

