

TYPE 2 DIABETES

Understanding, Taking Control, and
Managing Your Health

Type 2 Diabetes

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Disclaimer

We hope you enjoy reading this publication, however, we do suggest you read our disclaimer.

All the material written in this document is provided for informational purposes only and is general in nature.

Every person is a unique individual and what has worked for some, or even many, may not work for you. Any information perceived as advice must be considered in light of your own particular set of circumstances.

The author or person sharing this information does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy or outcome of your use of the content.

Every attempt has been made to provide well-researched and up-to-date content at the time of writing. Now all the legalities have been taken care of, please enjoy the content.

Introduction

In millions of households worldwide, a relentless struggle unfolds daily – the battle against Type 2 Diabetes. This widespread metabolic disorder, characterized by high blood sugar levels and insulin resistance, has become a defining health challenge of our time.

As the number of individuals diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes continues to rise, so does the urgent need for comprehensive, accessible, and practical guidance on managing this condition.

Navigating the intricacies of Type 2 Diabetes requires more than just medical knowledge; it demands a holistic approach that addresses the physical, emotional, and psychological aspects of this condition.

Fear, frustration, and uncertainty are natural companions on this journey, and acknowledging these emotions is the first step toward resilience. Knowledge and understanding are the first steps toward boosting physical and emotional wellbeing.

In the chapters that follow, you will gain insight into the fundamentals of Type 2 Diabetes – demystifying its causes, understanding its impact on the body, and unraveling the crucial link between lifestyle choices and disease management.

A type 2 diabetes diagnosis can be daunting and fearful, as possible and potential outcomes can be very frightening. However, a diagnosis is not a sentence. You have the ability to change outcomes by instigating positive changes, that you can learn about here.

Causes and Risk Factors of Type 2 Diabetes



It's important to know the factors that contribute to type 2 diabetes and how you can minimize your risk!

Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes and one of the leading causes of death around the world.

If you have been diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, it means that your pancreas is not producing enough insulin.

Whatever it can produce it is not working as it should. This prevents the body from using energy from the food you eat properly.

What causes type 2 diabetes and how do you know if you are at risk of developing this disease? Is there something you can do to avoid having diabetes? That is what we will look at right now.

Causes of Type 2 Diabetes

Here are the top factors that can lead to type 2 diabetes.

Genetics and Upbringing/Family Influences

Type 2 diabetes tends to run in the family, so if you have parents, grandparents, or siblings who have type 2 diabetes, you may be more likely to develop it.

That is partly due to gene mutations, particularly involving genes that control the production of glucose or insulin and the regulation of their levels in the body.

However, having a family history of diabetes does not mean you will automatically get it, or conversely, that you won't get it if your family is diabetes-free.

Other factors, such as your eating habits and level of physical activity can also affect your risks for type 2 diabetes, which brings us to the next points below.

Overweight or Obesity

If you are overweight or obese, you have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The extra weight you carry as fat makes your muscles and tissue cells resistant to insulin. Muscle cells are designed to respond to insulin.

When the ratio of fat to muscle increases, the body overall is less able to maintain balanced blood sugar levels, and this worsens as the ratio increases further.

In particular, carrying excessive weight around your belly (also called visceral fat) can make you more prone to diabetes. For one, this type of fat produces retinol-binding protein 4, making your body more insulin-resistant.

You can evaluate your excess weight by calculating your BMI, or body mass index. Your BMI is calculated using your weight and height. To make it easy for you, you can use a [BMI calculator](#). If you have a BMI of 25 to 29.9, you are overweight, and if your BMI is 30 to 39.9, you are classified as being obese.

Physical Inactivity

If you barely exercise, or worse, do not exercise at all, you have a higher chance of getting type 2 diabetes. Lack of exercise and a sedentary lifestyle go hand-in-hand with being overweight or obese.

When you exercise, you can decrease insulin resistance because muscle cells have more insulin receptors than fat cells. Insulin then becomes more effective and helps lower blood sugar levels.

Unhealthy Lifestyle Habits and Choices

Your lifestyle habits and choices can also contribute to the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. If you drink high amounts of alcohol, smoke, or use drugs, you are at a higher risk of getting the disease.

The biggest single factor that causes insulin resistance (the precursor to Type 2 diabetes) is persistently elevated blood glucose levels. This almost always results from over-consumption of foods and drinks with high sugar content.

Foods that are high on the Glycemic Index all contribute to raising blood sugar levels. Poor diet and lifestyle choices can lead to obesity and eventually Type 2 diabetes.

Other Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes

Aside from the top factors discussed above, the following are also risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes.

- High blood pressure or heart disease.
- Age 45 and above.
- Race and ethnicity - African American, Alaska Natives, Hispanic or Latino, American Indian, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders.
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.
- Low HDL levels, which is the good cholesterol.

In Summary

Whether it runs in the family or not, you can avoid and manage type 2 diabetes by eating a healthy diet and making healthy lifestyle choices. You may not have control over some risk factors, but there are many others you can address so you can avoid getting type 2 diabetes.

Ensure you eat foods high in fiber and ones that contain plenty of nutritional value and are low in added sugar. Reduce your salt intake and avoid processed foods containing dangerous trans fats.

It is also important to engage in physical activities more than three times a week and maintain a healthy weight. You can seek professional help in creating meal plans and exercise programs if you are unsure of what to do next.

Long-Term Complications of Type 2 Diabetes



Type 2 diabetes can result in various complications, most of which you have to deal with for the long term.

These complications develop over time, and more often than not, you may not notice any symptoms in the early stages.

So, even when you feel fine, if you're at a high risk of getting this disease, you must take extra care to prevent or delay its complications.

This can be done through keeping a healthy weight, eating a proper diet, and keeping your blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol levels within the normal ranges.

It also means getting early treatment if any symptoms become apparent. Don't forget to get regular check-ups and screening as well because they can help you pick up any problems early.

Let's take a look at the potential long-term complications of type 2 diabetes.

Heart Disease and Stroke

If you have diabetes, you're at twice the risk of heart disease or stroke than those without diabetes. This is because, with diabetes, it's harder to control your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, which hampers proper blood flow and causes blood vessel problems.

Most strokes happen because there's a blood clot in the brain's blood vessels. Having diabetes makes it much harder to manage blood sugar, which can damage and clog arteries.

Vision Problems

Diabetes can also result in eye problems, even blindness. Your vision can be impaired when excessive blood sugar resulting from diabetes damages blood vessels in the retina, which is known as diabetic retinopathy.

It can lead to cataracts or clouding of the lens and glaucoma if there is an increased fluid pressure buildup in the eye.

Kidney Disease

Chronic kidney disease (CKD) can also be a result of diabetes. Kidneys can be damaged because of high blood sugar levels. In serious cases, the kidneys may completely fail to work, so there may be the need for regular dialysis to filter the blood or a kidney transplant.

Nerve Damage

Diabetes can result in nerve damage or neuropathy. It's one of the most common diabetes complications and is characterized by numbness, tingling, burning, and pain, mostly in the feet and legs.

Nerve damage can also affect blood vessels, heart, and digestion. In men, neuropathy can also result in erectile dysfunction.

Skin Infections

When you have diabetes, you're more prone to skin infections and sores, including foot ulcers. It can result in pain, itching, or oozing in the legs and feet, but it can also occur in other areas of the body. If the infections go on for too long, the infected part may need to be amputated.

Digestion Problems

Diabetes can affect the digestive system and result in gastroparesis. It makes it hard to digest the food that you eat, which then affects your bowel movement. High blood sugar levels that persist for a period can damage the vagus nerve, which controls the movement of food through the digestive tract.

If the vagus nerve stops working, it takes longer for your stomach to empty its contents. You might experience vomiting, nausea, heartburn, bloating, and stomach spasms. Because food absorption becomes less predictable, it also makes managing your blood glucose levels even more difficult.

Weak Immune System

Diabetes can weaken your immune system and make it less effective. This happens because high blood sugar levels put extra stress on your body, making your systems work harder. The resulting reduced function includes the white blood cells, which are essential to disease prevention.

If you have a weak immune system, you're more prone to common infections, which can then lead to serious complications.

Depression

Depression and diabetes may also be linked as diabetics often develop depression and other mental health problems. If you have diabetes, you're more likely to get stressed and anxious because having the disease itself is emotionally draining.

Tooth Decay and Gum Disease

Diabetes can cause damage to small blood vessels, including the ones that help nourish your teeth and gums. This can result in tooth decay and gum infections.

Additionally, high blood sugar levels encourage bacteria to grow and stay in your gums. You might notice your gums receding or the bones supporting your teeth weakening.

Sleep Apnea

Sleep apnea is another complication that you might experience if you have type 2 diabetes. When you're asleep, your breathing pauses, resulting in loud snoring and daytime fatigue. You might also wake up coughing or choking.

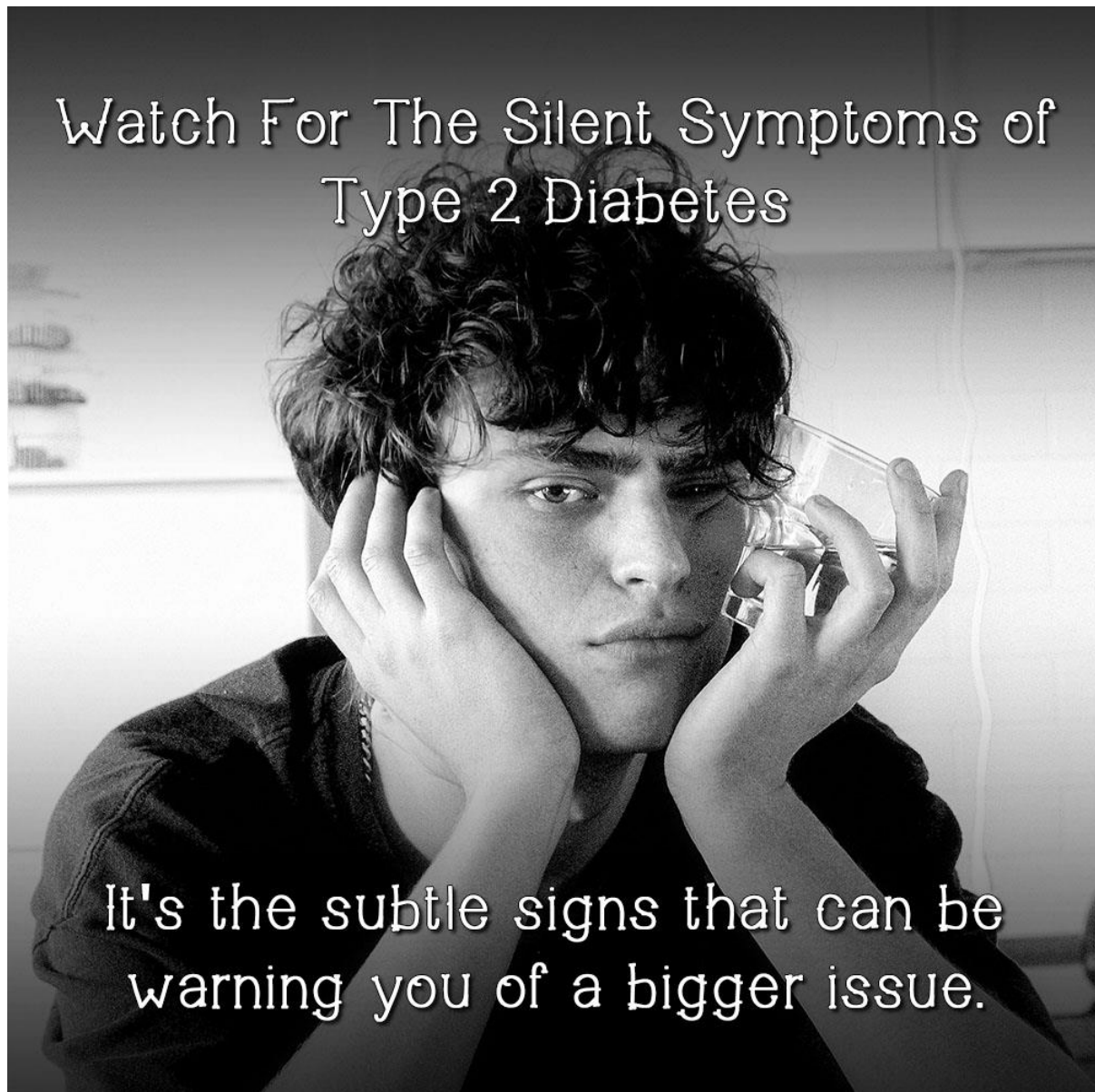
Sleep apnea makes it harder to control your blood glucose level and leads to high blood pressure and heart disease. It may also cause sudden death.

In Summary

Diabetes can result in many long-term complications, but if you take precautionary measures and preventive steps, you can avoid or delay the negative effects.

Remember that your actions are the biggest factor in the management of your diabetes. So, don't forget to eat healthily, exercise, take your medications, and visit your doctor regularly for checkups.

Silent Symptoms - Warning Signs of Type 2 Diabetes



Type 2 diabetes is a debilitating disease that has some silent little symptoms that can alert you to a potential problem.

It can reduce the quality of your life and result in other health complications when not managed properly.

You may be at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, particularly if it's in your family history and you're making poor lifestyle choices and health habits.

If you think you're at a higher risk, keep an eye on your health and watch out for the following symptoms, which could be your warning signs!

Do You Make Frequent Trips To The Toilet?

Taking more bathroom breaks than usual can be a sign of type 2 diabetes. It suggests that your blood sugar is too high and is being directed into your urine. This is because your body can't keep up with your increased glucose levels, so it attempts to flush out the excess sugar via the kidneys.

Are You Always Hungry or Thirsty?

Diabetes can make you feel hungry all the time, even after a meal. This is because insulin resistance causes improper intake of blood sugar into the muscles. Even though the blood is awash with sugar, muscle cells aren't receiving it as they should.

This causes a low-energy situation which triggers hormone responses that send a message to the brain about needing to eat more food. It can also make you feel thirsty.

It is normal to drink 2-4 liters of water a day, but if you're drinking more water than you normally do and still feel thirsty, it's a warning sign that needs your attention.

Your high blood sugar makes you urinate frequently, so the body uses thirst to tell you to rehydrate. Diabetes can also result in less saliva, making your mouth feel dry, so you feel the need to drink more water.

Do You Feel Exhausted All The Time?

Feeling fatigued and weak for doing your daily activities or even after eating a meal is another warning sign of type 2 diabetes. This is a result of the same conditions that cause feelings of hunger even after eating.

Simply, the energy in the blood is not being used by the muscles. This process is what makes you feel exhausted all the time.

Do You Feel Pins and Needles In Your Feet?

Another red flag is the feeling of painful pins and needles in your feet, especially when you wake up. High blood sugar levels can damage the nerves, which particularly affects the extremities.

Numbness in the feet can make you more prone to infections too, as you may not notice small wounds that can worsen without treatment.

Are You Losing Weight Unexpectedly?

Sometimes, type 2 diabetes can result in severe, unintended weight loss as the body uses the stored fats for energy. Unexpected weight loss may also be due to increased urination and dehydration.

If you're losing too much weight without trying to, be sure to get tested as this could develop into diabetic complications later.

Do You Get Frequent Urinary Tract and Yeast Infections?

Having recurring urinary tract and yeast infections is another warning sign of type 2 diabetes. The excess glucose in the urine allows bacteria and yeast to multiply faster.

The moisture and warmth in the genitalia plus the high sugar levels and resulting acidic pH levels make it an ideal environment for microbes to thrive.

Does Your Vision Get Blurry?

Fluctuating blood glucose levels can cause your vision to blur. The lens in the eye swells due to the excess sugar in the blood. If it gets worse, you might develop more serious conditions that can lead to blindness.

Is Your Oral Health Declining?

If you have frequent oral sores and infections, it's a sign that you could have elevated blood sugar levels. It puts you at an increased risk of developing other mouth diseases such as gingivitis and periodontal disease.

Are You Always Grumpy and Irritable?

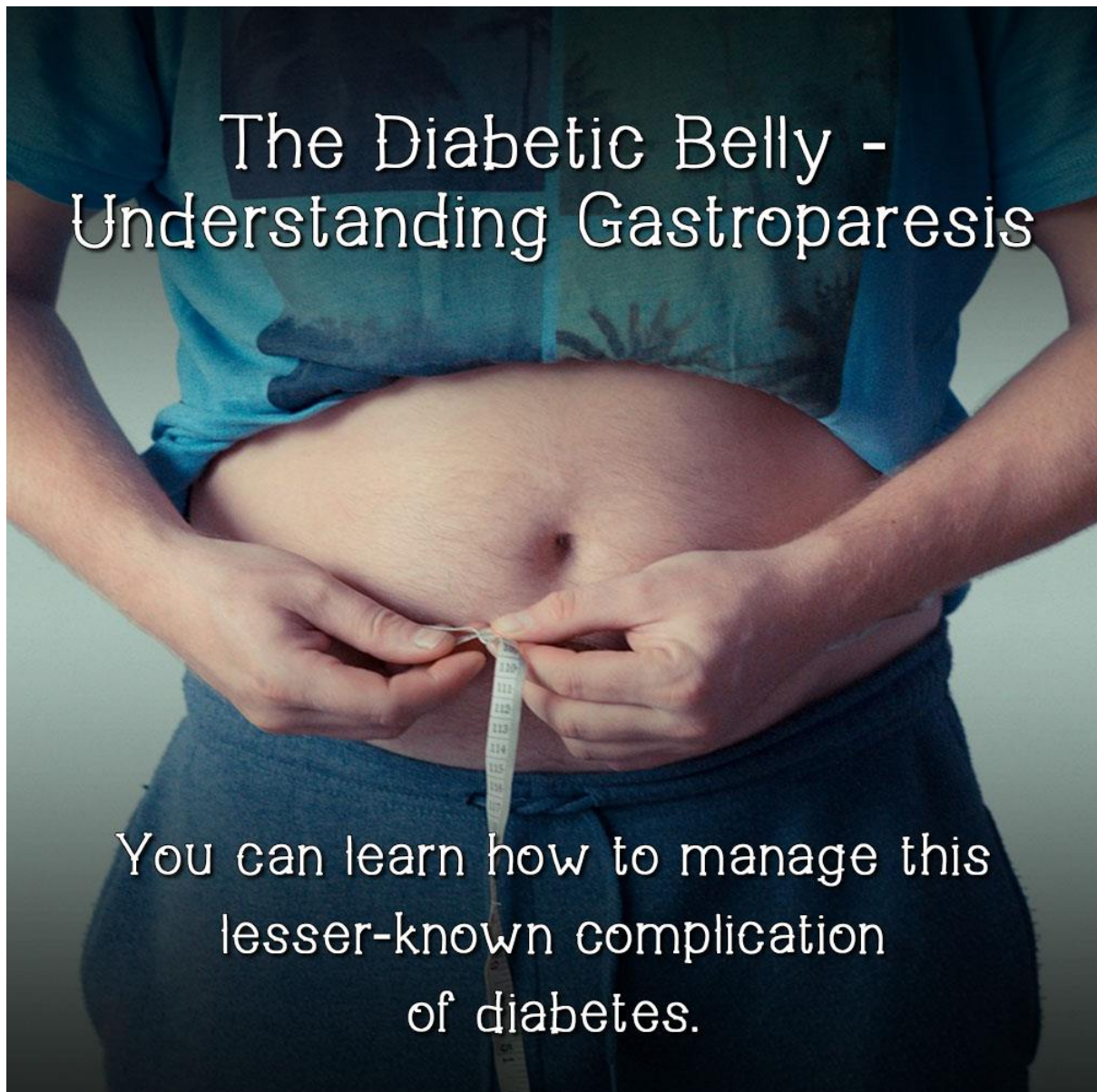
Your rollercoaster of moods can be due to your fluctuating sugar levels. You might find that you're easily irritated, short-tempered, or always grumpy. If so this is another red flag for type 2 diabetes.

High blood sugar can make you feel low in vitality, so you prefer to stay at home and lie in bed, similar to the symptoms of depression. Note, however, that mood changes due to high sugar levels happen along with other symptoms, not only on their own.

In Summary

Type 2 diabetes develops over time, so it's important to know the early warning signs to watch out for. If you experience some of these symptoms, get yourself checked. Early detection can help prevent the disease from worsening and developing any long-term complications.

Diabetic Gastroparesis - The Diabetic Belly



Diabetes can affect different parts of your body.

If you have trouble digesting food, feel like you always have heartburn, or feel like you could be physically sick at any time, there may be a complication affecting your digestive tract.

You could have what is called gastroparesis.

The term 'diabetic belly' is not a medical term but rather a descriptive way of referring to gastroparesis in individuals with diabetes. It highlights the relationship between the condition and diabetes, emphasizing that gastroparesis is one of the potential complications.

What Is Diabetic Gastroparesis?

Diabetic gastroparesis occurs when diabetes has damaged the vagus nerve. This is a long cranial nerve that regulates digestion, along with other body functions. This nerve controls how fast your stomach empties.

When it is damaged, the muscles in the stomach and the rest of the digestive tract cannot function properly, so food stays in your stomach longer than necessary.

Diabetes is one of the biggest risk factors for developing gastroparesis. It's more common among people with type 1 diabetes, but you're also at greater risk if you have type 2 diabetes for more than 10 years.

What Are The Symptoms?

You might have diabetic gastroparesis if you experience some or all of the following signs.

- Nausea or vomiting.
- Heartburn or reflux.
- Loss of appetite.
- Bloating.
- Unintended weight loss.
- Feeling full easily.
- Stomach spasms.
- Unstable blood glucose levels.

You may experience minor or severe symptoms depending on how much damage there is to the vagus nerve. These signs can flare up at any time.

However, you may experience them particularly when you eat foods that are high in fiber and fat because they are slow to digest.

What Are The Complications?

Having diabetic gastroparesis makes it more difficult to stabilize blood sugar levels. Because of the irregularity of food digestion, blood glucose is also hard to regulate. It can be too high or too low.

When your sugar levels are too high, it can lead to kidney damage, eye damage, neuropathy, heart disease, and foot complications. When it's too low, you may experience shakiness, dizziness, seizures, or diabetic coma.

Diabetic gastroparesis can also cause malnutrition, undigested food masses called bezoars, electrolyte imbalances, dehydration, esophageal inflammation, and bacterial overgrowth in the digestive tract.

It can also lead to depression because this chronic condition can be overwhelming and exhausting.

Treating Diabetic Gastroparesis

Do not self-diagnose! You do not know what is going on inside you. Your doctor will do a physical examination and a few tests, such as a barium X-ray, gastric emptying scintigraphy, blood tests, imaging, or an upper endoscopy.

The biggest component of treating gastroparesis is managing blood sugar levels. You'll have to monitor your blood glucose more frequently, and your doctor may change your insulin regime accordingly.

Other medications can also help manage the symptoms of gastroparesis. These include metoclopramide or erythromycin which can relieve nausea and stimulate muscles in the stomach to help in proper digestion.

In severe cases, you might need intravenous nutrition or a feeding tube, which will bypass the stomach completely and deliver the nutrients directly to the intestine for absorption.

Dietary changes are also critical in treating diabetic gastroparesis. You'll be recommended to eat frequent smaller meals, limit high-fiber foods, avoid carbonated drinks and alcohol, and avoid high-fat foods.

Some of the best foods to eat are lean meats and fish, tofu, eggs, and well-cooked vegetables. Taking a walk after a meal can also help in proper digestion.

In Summary

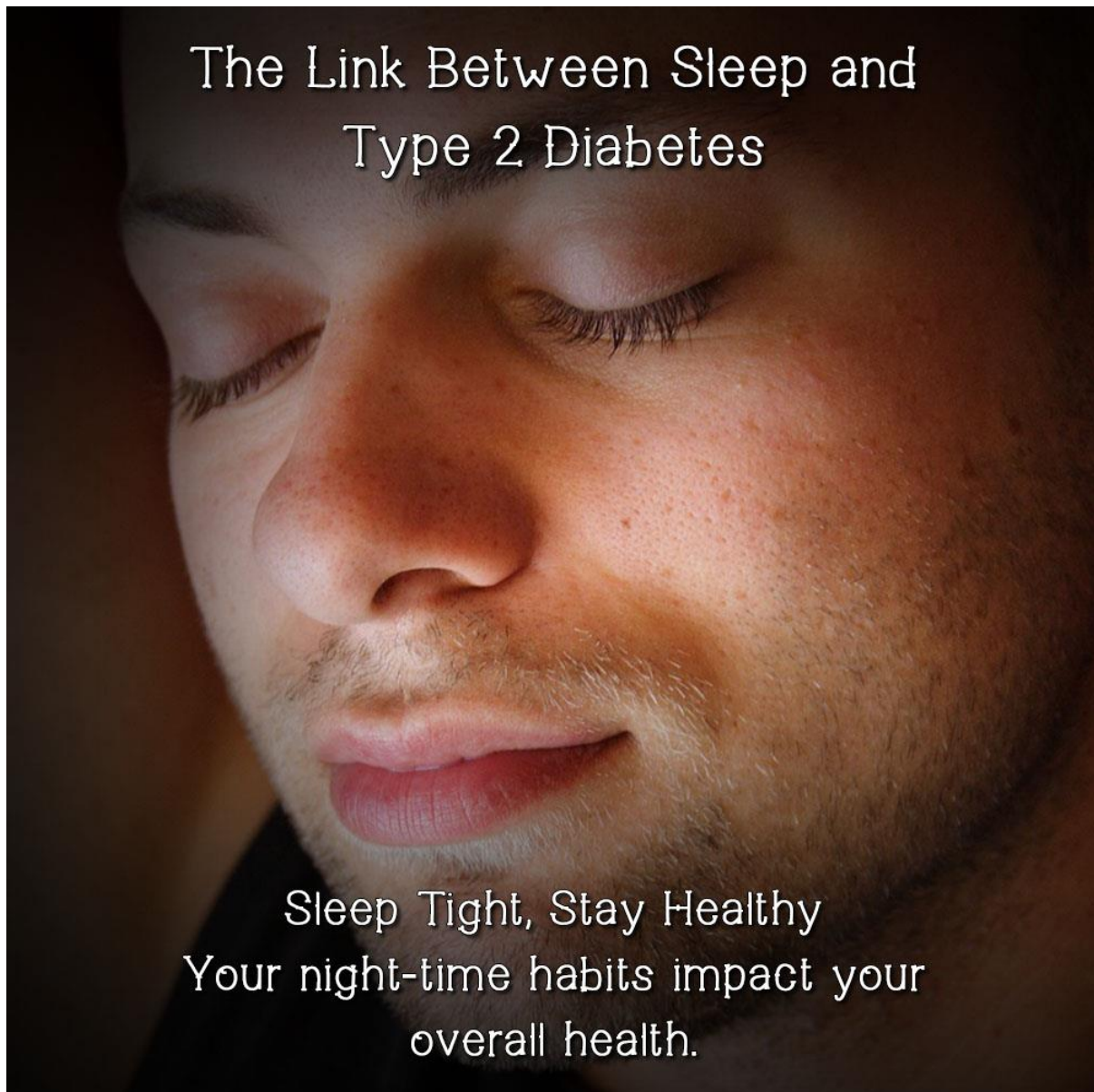
Gastroparesis is where the normal functioning of the stomach muscles is affected. This leads to the delay of stomach contents being emptied into the small intestine, which is what causes pain and discomfort.

When gastroparesis occurs in individuals with diabetes, it can sometimes be colloquially referred to as 'the diabetic belly' due to its connection with the disease. Diabetes can result in many complications as time goes by and diabetic gastroparesis is one of them.

Now that you're armed with the basic knowledge of what this chronic condition is, you have a better chance of preventing it from happening or managing your condition more successfully.

The likelihood of developing complications varies from person to person, but when you know how to best manage your blood sugar levels daily, you can improve your outlook.

The Connection Between Sleep and Type 2 Diabetes



You probably know that obesity, lack of physical activities, and unhealthy eating habits can lead to type 2 diabetes, but did you know that sleep may be an issue too?

Did you also know that type 2 diabetes can affect your sleep?

Or that poor sleep patterns can contribute to a type 2 diabetes diagnosis?

Sleep is one of the most underrated risk factors for type 2 diabetes. Yet, sleep plays an important role in ensuring that you stay healthy and avoid developing any type of health problem, including type 2 diabetes and its complications.

If you already suffer from type 2 diabetes, you may already have poor sleep. Therefore, there is a definite link, that goes both ways, with sleep and type 2 diabetes. Let's first look at how a lack of sleep can increase your risk.

Lack of Sleep Can Increase Risk for Type 2 Diabetes

Poor sleep is a contributing factor to type 2 diabetes. When you are sleep-deprived, it's harder for the body to regulate your blood glucose levels. Therefore, your pancreas will need to work harder to produce more insulin and process the excess sugar in your body.

Not getting quality sleep can throw your hormones off balance. Your body produces more cortisol (a stress hormone), and when you have increased cortisol levels insulin becomes less effective, and unhealthy amounts of sugar remain in your bloodstream.

This causes another compounding problem, because if you are constantly stressed, you may be more likely to crave sweet foods and drinks. This then leads to weight gain and higher blood sugar levels.

Over time, your pancreas will have a harder time keeping up with the blood glucose levels, leading to type 2 diabetes.

Now let's look at how diabetes can affect your sleep.

Type 2 Diabetes Can Lead to Sleep Problems

Having type 2 diabetes can cause sleep disturbances because unstable blood sugar levels can lead to problems such as insomnia, continued fatigue, and sleep apnea. There may be many reasons why you can't sleep. For example, you may be worrying about your ill health which can keep you awake at night.

Or you may have to get up often to go to the bathroom, as you may have to urinate more often as your kidneys work harder to expel the excess sugar in your body. Diabetes can also cause headaches and extreme exhaustion, making it hard to fall asleep at night.

How to Improve Your Sleep When You Have Type 2 Diabetes

As said, a lack of quality sleep increases your risk for type 2 diabetes and vice versa. Here are some tips for improving your sleep.

Be Intentional About Getting Enough Sleep

You need to be conscious and committed to getting adequate sleep, so develop a sleep schedule and stick to it. Plan for it just like you would plan for other activities. Make sure you go to bed and wake up at around the same time every day. This will help condition your body and set your biological clock.

Use Relaxation Techniques

Find ways to de-stress and relax your mind before bedtime. You can do breathing techniques, listen to relaxing music or the beautiful sounds of nature, or follow a guided meditation. Don't gloss over this tip. It's an important one, but one too many people think of as being trite!

Don't Drink Alcohol or Caffeine

Avoid alcohol, carbonated drinks, and caffeinated drinks, especially at night. Alcohol is not a good 'sleep-inducer' so don't make it a habit! You will only make other health issues worse.

Get Tested for Sleep Apnea

You may not be aware that you have sleep apnea, but if your family complains about your loud snoring or you feel excessively sleepy during the day, have yourself tested. Sleep apnea is a serious health issue on its own, so don't neglect to do this if you or your family think it may be a problem.

Avoid Distractions

Keep your room distraction-free at bedtime. Put your phone on silent or turn off your electronic devices. Your sleep is important, so make it a distraction-free time!

In Summary

Sleep and type 2 diabetes are linked. Poor sleep is a risk factor for type 2 diabetes and type 2 diabetes can cause sleep problems. It's almost like the chicken and the egg! Which one comes first?

Both can affect your blood sugar levels, which can worsen your diabetes. So whatever you do, make sure you get quality sleep every night.

Type 2 Diabetes May Lead To Cognitive Decline



Type 2 diabetes can lead to various health complications, and cognitive decline is a common, underdiagnosed complication.

Yet, it can affect your daily activities and independence.

Cognitive impairment is more common among senior-aged people, but younger people with type 2 diabetes are also observed to experience mild to moderate cognitive decline.

The Link Between Type 2 Diabetes and Cognitive Decline

The brain controls every aspect of your body, every little movement and function. To do this, the brain uses sugar in your blood to burn as fuel and power your cells.

Did you know that your brain consumes the most energy to keep the body functioning? Half of all the energy in your body goes to help your brain do what it needs to do.

If your sugar levels are unstable, your brain also goes off balance. Diabetes can damage the nerves and blood vessels in the brain, affecting your memory, learning, mood, hormones, and more. Over time, it can lead to serious cognitive problems like Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Insulin Resistance

Cognitive decline happens because of insulin resistance. Insulin plays a role in regulating cognitive function, but with type 2 diabetes, the brain produces less insulin, contributing to cognitive decline.

High Sugar Levels

Type 2 diabetes is caused by persistently high blood sugar levels, which have been linked to atrophying or the shrinking of the hippocampus. The hippocampus is the part of the brain that's mainly responsible for memory and learning.

Obesity

Many people who have type 2 diabetes are also obese. If you carry extra weight, you have a higher risk of experiencing cognitive decline. Obesity contributes to the shrinking of the hippocampus, and when its size decreases, it affects cognition and other brain functions.

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure is also a contributing factor to cognitive decline, and many people who have type 2 diabetes also have high blood pressure. It contributes to faster atrophy and causes neuroinflammation, leading to memory loss and a decline in thinking skills.

High blood pressure can also contribute to the development of dementia including Alzheimer's disease.

How to Reduce The Risk and Control Type 2 Diabetes

The longer you have type 2 diabetes, the more severe the effects can be on your cognitive function. Therefore, it makes sense to do something about it and take the necessary steps to avoid or control type 2 diabetes, so you can prevent cognitive decline.

Manage Blood Sugar

Better blood glucose control can help prevent cognitive impairment. Monitor and keep your sugar levels within the normal range.

Eat Healthy Foods Daily

You have to watch what you eat and plan your meals properly when you have diabetes. There's no one-size-fits-all diet for diabetes control, but in general, you must make healthier food choices.

Eat more fruits and vegetables, reduce the consumption of red and processed meats, cut down on added sugars, and choose healthier (low-GI) carbohydrates.

Be Physically Active

It's also important to stay physically active. Keep moving every day.

Exercise can help reduce insulin resistance and inflammation, reducing your risk of cognitive decline. Plus, physical activities can boost your memory and thinking skills too.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

Keep your weight within a healthy range. This goes hand in hand with what you eat and your physical activities. Weight loss can help improve your memory, attention, and coordination.

Quit Smoking and Stop Drinking Alcohol Excessively

It's best to quit smoking and avoid drinking alcohol when you have type 2 diabetes. It has been proven time and time again that people who smoke cigarettes and drink alcohol experience faster cognitive decline than those who don't. Are you prepared to risk it?

Manage Stress

People with type 2 diabetes are prone to elevated stress levels. When you're constantly stressed it affects your cognitive function. So, you must find ways to manage your stress levels. Do more of the things you enjoy, as long as they are healthy activities.

In Summary

Type 2 diabetes can certainly lead to cognitive decline. In the past, it was a complication that was not often considered, but now some medical experts are calling some types of dementia 'type 3 diabetes', because of the link to high blood sugar levels.

It can cause cognitive impairments, such as poor memory and reduced thinking skills, or worse, dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Therefore, it is important to manage your type 2 diabetes symptoms and make better, healthier choices to avoid cognitive decline.

Healthy Foods and Meal Planning for Type 2 Diabetes



Choosing the right foods and meal planning is important at any stage of life, but it's even more important if you have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.

Developing a healthy eating plan can help you control your blood glucose levels, as well as maintain a healthy weight, and reduce your risk factors for any further complications.

Now, you might feel a little depressed thinking you will have to follow some strict meal plan, but that's not necessarily the case.

You'll be surprised that the recommended diet for type 2 diabetes doesn't have to be complicated and tricky. You can still enjoy delicious meals that are easy to prepare.

Healthy Meals Are Key To Successful Type 2 Diabetes Management

Here are some tips for choosing the best foods and planning your meals.

Count the Carbs

Carbohydrates, especially unhealthy carbs, can easily elevate your blood sugar levels, so it's important to be mindful of the carbs that you eat. You can work with a dietician to figure out how many carbs you can eat per meal, per day. You will soon find it is easy to monitor.

Use The Plate Method

Another way to manage your meals is with the plate method. It's a visual way to make sure that you eat enough vegetables and protein while reducing your carb intake. You use a regular 9-inch plate.

Fill half the plate with non-starchy vegetables, for example, carrots, broccoli, and cabbage, one quarter with lean protein, for example, chicken, fish, beans, eggs, or tofu, and the other quarter with healthy carbs, such as whole grains, or other vegetables or fruit.

Mind Your Portion Size

When you have type 2 diabetes, it's important to get your food portions under control. This is particularly applicable when you're eating out because portions served at restaurants are often huge!

They may load up your plate and there is enough food to feed two people. So be mindful of your portion size, as this will help you manage your blood sugar and weight easier.

Establish a Regular Meal Routine

Stick to a regular meal routine, which can help you ensure that your blood sugar is stable. Make sure that you don't skip meals and that you don't overeat later because that will cause increased irregularities in your blood glucose levels. Having a regular meal schedule will also ensure that you don't get too hungry. It's also easier to manage your food portions.

Plan Your Meals Ahead

Using a meal planner, lay out what you'll eat each day of the week for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and if necessary, two healthy, light snacks in between. Find diabetes-friendly recipes and list down your ingredients.

Create a grocery list so you can purchase everything that you need. It's also helpful to have a list of your go-to meals that you can eat when you're not in the mood to cook.

Foods to Eat for Type 2 Diabetes

There's no diabetic diet or one-size-fits-all diet for type 2 diabetes. However, certain foods are good to eat to help you control your blood sugar levels and weight.

Here's an example of foods you can add to your grocery list.

- Broccoli, carrots and cabbage
- Apples and pears
- Avocado
- Tomatoes and corn
- Skinless chicken
- Turkey
- Salmon and other fish
- Nuts and seeds
- Whole grains

You should avoid the following or at least limit your consumption.

- Pasta, white rice, and white bread
- Sweets, cake, and cookies
- Chips or crisps
- Canned soups
- Bacon and red meat
- Fried foods
- Dairy
- Starchy vegetables (for example, potatoes in moderation)

If you are buying packaged foods, make sure that you read the nutrition facts label and the ingredients list. Look for specific nutrition facts like the total grams of carbs per serving and the serving size.

The ingredients are arranged based on the highest total content, so make sure that sugar isn't at the top of the list. If in doubt, don't buy it!

Also, be mindful of the other terms for sugar, such as corn syrup, dextrose, or fructose. These are added sugars that are bad for your health and can worsen your type 2 diabetes.

In Summary

What you eat, how much you eat, and how often you eat can affect your type 2 diabetes management. If you eat mindfully, count your carbs, and practice portion control, your blood sugar levels can improve considerably.

Couple that with physical activities, and quality sleep, and you are on your way to a healthier body!

Reverse Type 2 Diabetes with Lifestyle Changes



Can you 'reverse' type 2 diabetes?

This isn't really the correct term, the correct term is that your type 2 diabetes can go into remission.

However, you may want to know how you can take control of your health and stop your symptoms from worsening.

You need to make lifestyle changes, and that's what we're going to cover.

Exercise and Be Physically Active

Getting into remission when you have type 2 diabetes has been found effective when you exercise regularly and strive to be more physically active. If you haven't been active and don't even exercise, it's about time you start.

But don't feel too overwhelmed. You don't have to go to the gym or perform complicated or difficult workouts. Instead, you can begin with simple activities like walking, jogging, or riding a bike. What's important is to get into a light sweat! Sweat and get your heart pumping.

Start small and gradually increase your activities as you become more comfortable. The goal is to exercise 30 minutes every day, for at least five days a week.

Exercise will help you keep your blood sugar levels down, lose excess weight, reduce stress, and lower your risk of other diabetes complications, such as heart problems.

It's important to note, that exercise alone isn't enough to reverse your diabetes, or as we said earlier, go into remission. You have to combine it with other changes to your lifestyle, especially your diet.

Maintain a Healthy Weight

Most people who have type 2 diabetes are also overweight or obese, and losing weight is an effective way to reverse this chronic disease. Ideally, depending on your weight, you may need to lose 30 pounds or more, and the sooner the better.

You can ideally shed the excess weight through exercise and dietary changes.

Eat Healthily

Changing your eating habits and food choices is a big factor in reversing your type 2 diabetes. There's no magic diabetes diet, but in general, you must reduce eating foods that have high sugar content and high-GI carbohydrates.

You might also want to try the Mediterranean Diet which is a super healthy diet for anyone. This diet gives you a higher chance of getting into remission. You must avoid eating processed foods and shift to a nutrient-dense diet. You must also avoid all sweet drinks with added sugar and artificial flavorings.

Eating healthily can help you maintain a moderate weight, manage your diabetes symptoms, improve your overall physical health, and prevent mental health problems that typically accompany the disease.

Get Quality and Restful Sleep

Ensuring that you sleep well for at least 7 hours each night is also helpful in reversing type 2 diabetes. If you don't get quality and restful sleep, it makes you feel exhausted the next day and triggers sweet cravings.

Sleep helps the body regulate blood sugar levels. Poor quality sleep and a reduced number of sleep hours can add to obesity risks.

Quit Smoking

Cigarette smoking can exacerbate the complications of diabetes, like heart disease, nerve damage, kidney disease, and blood vessel problems. Smoking makes it harder to manage your diabetes, but when you quit, it can improve your sugar levels.

Within 8 weeks of stopping smoking, your insulin becomes more effective, so it's easier to lower your blood sugar levels. Quitting is never easy. However, talk to your doctor if you need help in breaking this very bad habit.

Avoid Alcohol

Getting into remission requires being mindful of your alcohol intake. It's even better if you can quit drinking alcohol altogether. Beer, wine, and other liquor can make it harder to control your blood sugar. They can make your glucose level too high or too low, which isn't good either way.

Manage Stress

Stress is one of the major culprits of most chronic diseases, and the same is true with type 2 diabetes. Having to deal with diabetes issues and constant monitoring of blood sugar can feel overwhelming and stressful. Unfortunately, stress can make insulin resistance worse.

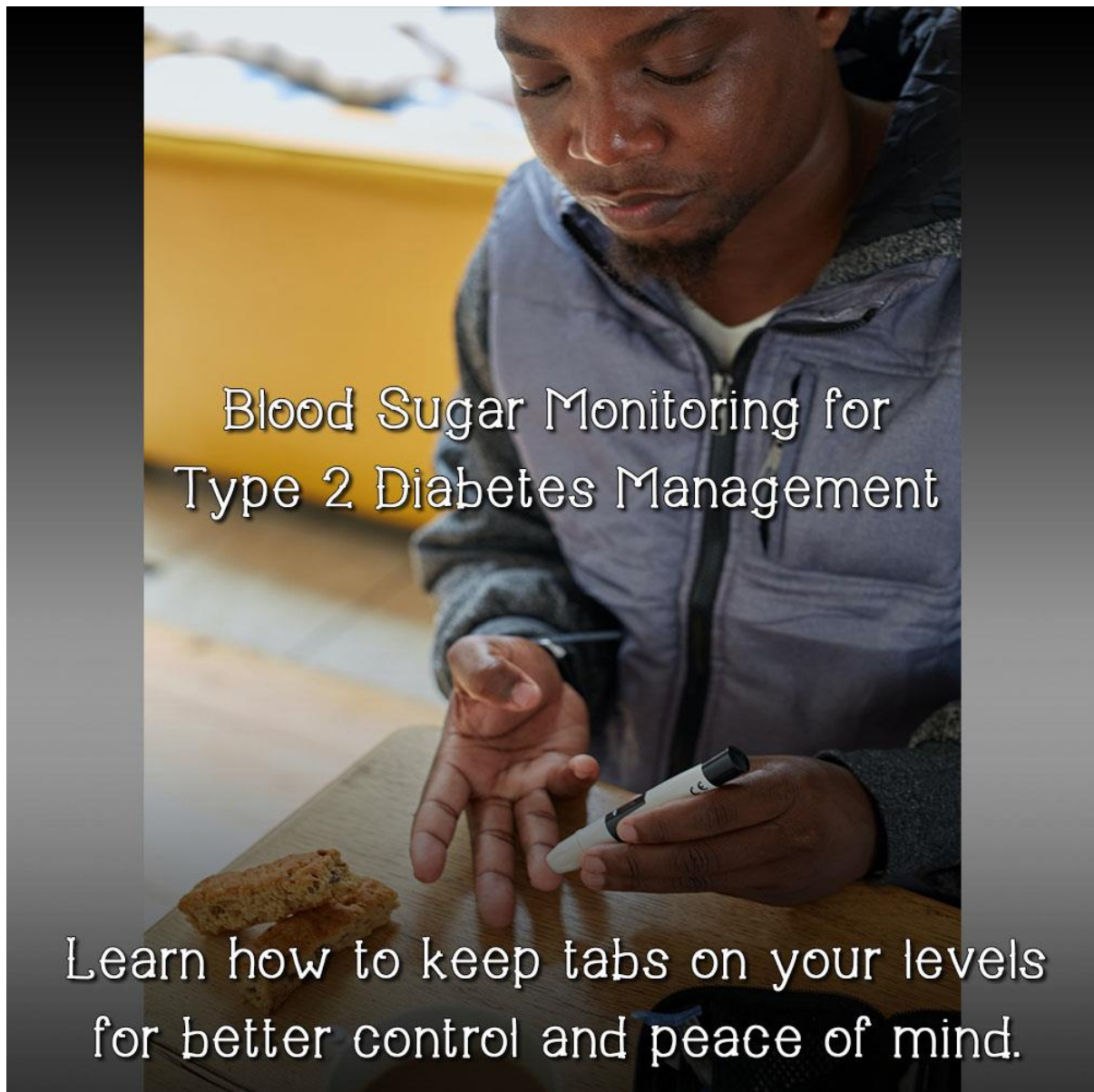
If you want to reverse your diabetes, it's essential to manage your stress levels. Engage in relaxing activities as much as possible.

In Summary

Type 2 diabetes can go into remission by engaging in healthier lifestyle changes. To reverse this chronic disease, your blood sugar levels must remain within the normal range for at least three months without the use of medications.

Eating healthily, getting physically active, and managing your stress are all essential changes you can do to help get your type 2 diabetes under control.

Blood Sugar Self-Monitoring



Type 2 diabetes is an ongoing disease, but you can still go into remission when you take essential steps, such as making the necessary lifestyle changes.

Monitoring your blood sugar levels is also important and plays a big part in keeping your levels under control.

By keeping a tab on your blood sugar levels, you can see what makes your numbers rise or fall. You can gain insights into how your body responds to anything you do in a day, whether it be eat, exercise, or take any medications.

You can use the information to manage your type 2 diabetes better, and that can help reduce the risks for other health complications. It also promotes personal responsibility for your health and keeps you engaged in adhering to your personal diabetes care.

Self-monitoring allows you to build your blood glucose profile, which your healthcare providers can use in individualized treatment planning. It empowers you to make informed decisions about your health.

Blood Sugar Monitoring Steps

This requires the use of a blood sugar meter and involves pricking a finger with a lancet device to get a blood sample. Here's the general guideline.

- Wash your hands so they are squeaky clean and dry.
- Prepare your glucose meter and ensure that it is clean too.
- Get a test strip and make sure the container is closed tightly to avoid exposing the rest of them to moisture.
- Gently massage your hand to help improve blood flow to your fingers.
- Prick your finger with a lancet, squeeze from the base of the finger, and get the small amount of blood onto the test strip.
- Place the test strip in the meter and wait for a few seconds for the reading.
- Record your results and take note of anything that might have affected the number, such as the foods that you ate recently or an activity you may have recently done.

Remember to keep your meter clean after use, and don't share it with anyone. You must also store your test strips in their container at room temperature, away from moisture, direct sunlight, or cold temperatures.

Using Continuous Glucose Monitoring

Another tool you can use is continuous glucose monitoring (CGM), so you don't have to deal with frequent finger pricks.

You will only have to do fingerstick blood glucose readings to calibrate the device. It is attached to your skin to measure your glucose levels 24/7. The sensor is placed on your abdomen or arm. There's an applicator and adhesive tape that holds it in place.

You need to change the sensor regularly, usually every one to two weeks. It has a transmitter that sends the results to your mobile phone or a wearable device. You can also set device alarms.

Some transmitters are reusable but others are part of a disposable sensor. Additionally, you can download your CGM data to a computer anytime. Some devices send the data continuously and allow you to share it with your healthcare provider.

Frequency of Self-Monitoring

If you have type 2 diabetes, you only need to check your blood sugar once or twice a day, depending on the type and amount of insulin you use. Once your blood sugar level is under control, checking it a few times a week will do.

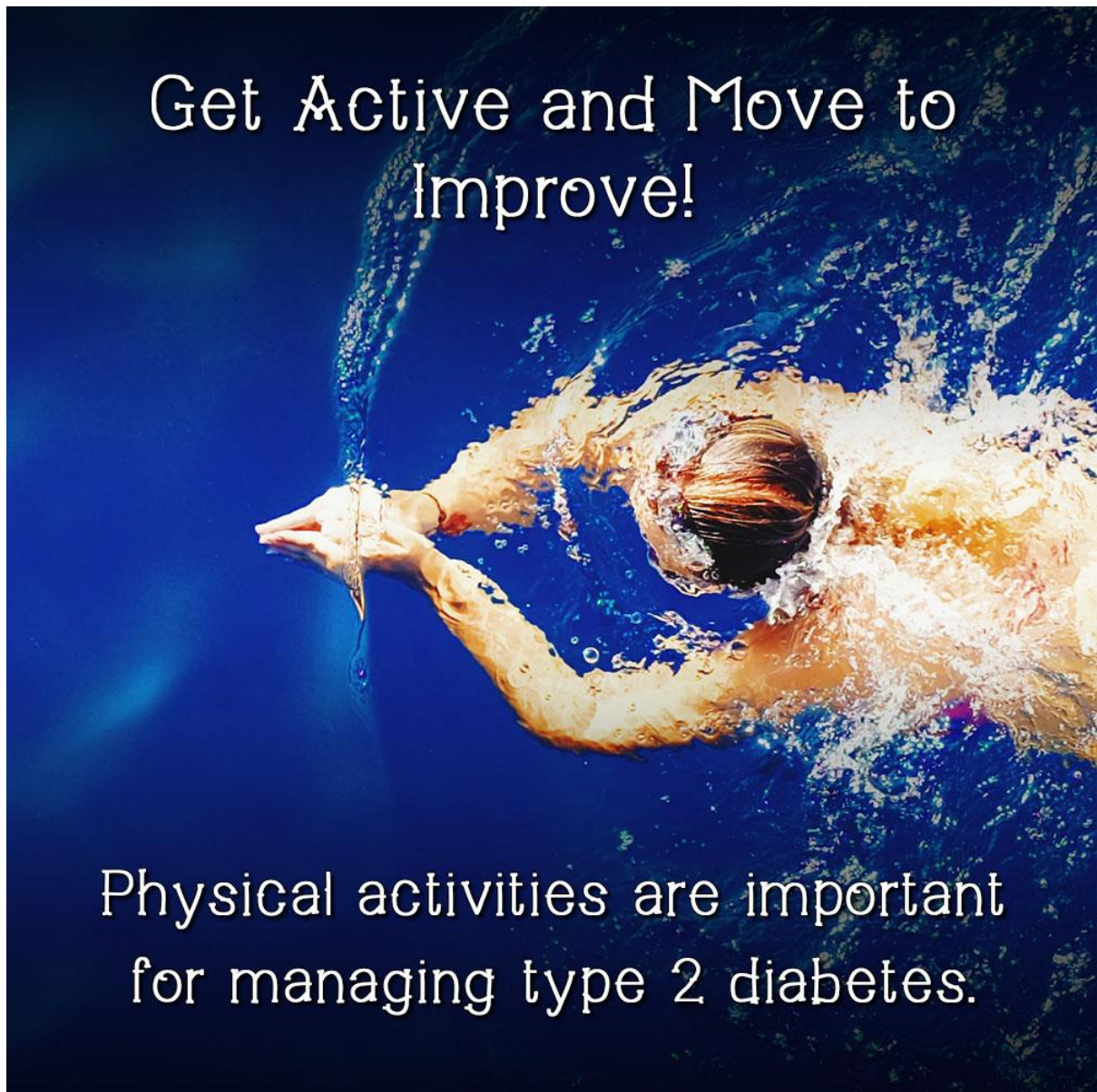
Blood glucose tests can be done when you wake up, before or after meals, and before you sleep at night. Your healthcare provider can tell you how often you need to record your results.

In Summary

Blood sugar self-monitoring is an essential aspect of managing your type 2 diabetes and having some sense of control over your health. Self-monitoring tools allow you to see how diabetes affects your body by showing you a bigger picture of your blood sugar levels over time.

Self-monitoring provides you with more information that you can use for more personalized care, guiding you on the changes you need to make in terms of diet, physical activities, stress management, etc. You will know when your sugar goes up or down, so you can take the necessary steps to keep it within the target range. Don't forget, your doctor is always ready to help you!

Exercise in Managing and Preventing Type 2 Diabetes



Maintaining an active lifestyle is crucial and highly recommended as a key management strategy for type 2 diabetes.

It can help reduce the risk of developing complications associated with this disease, as well as improve your overall health.

How Exercise Helps Manage and Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

Here are some of the reasons why you need to exercise, whether you have been diagnosed with diabetes or not!

Improves Insulin Sensitivity

Exercise helps improve insulin sensitivity throughout the body. When you exercise, your muscles and organs take up excess glucose from the bloodstream. This allows the body to use insulin more efficiently and lower blood sugar levels.

Muscles use 70-80 percent of the glucose from the food you eat, and exercise helps increase muscle mass. If your muscle mass is low, it prevents your body from clearing glucose from the bloodstream.

Lowers Risks of Heart Disease

An active lifestyle can lower the risk of heart disease. Exercise helps improve blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and blood sugar levels. It also keeps the heart rate up for prolonged periods, helping improve heart function and strength.

Exercise also reduces inflammation in the body, which is a key risk factor for heart disease.

Reduces Risks of Nerve Damage

Type 2 diabetes can cause nerve damage because of high blood sugar that restricts proper flow in the small blood vessels. With exercise, you can improve circulation throughout the body, ensuring the delivery of oxygen and blood to the nerves.

This can help prevent nerve damage and restore nerve function.

Helps You Lose Weight

This is an obvious one. Exercise plays a key role in helping you shed the excess weight you carry. It helps burn more calories and use up glucose for energy, reducing blood sugar levels.

Makes You Feel Happier

Type 2 diabetes can lead to mental health problems, such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Exercise aids in reducing that risk because when you do physical activities, your body produces more endorphins, the hormones that trigger positive feelings.

Plus, being able to finish a workout or stick to your routine can give you a sense of accomplishment. Therefore, exercise not only helps you to lose weight, but it helps boost your self-esteem and improves your overall mood.

Promotes Better Sleep

It is crucial to get quality, restful sleep. Lack of sleep can affect insulin sensitivity and increase blood sugar levels. Regular physical activity helps regulate your biological clock so that you can get quality sleep, reducing stress and anxiety that can keep you awake at night.

Tips to Start Exercising for Type 2 Diabetes

Now you know how exercise is essential for managing type 2 diabetes, but you may be thinking it's too hard to get started. Engaging in physical activities doesn't have to be difficult. It's easier than you may think!

Take It One Step At a Time

Don't rush yourself. Take baby steps, especially if you've been living a sedentary lifestyle. The goal is to complete at least 150 minutes of exercise every week, but you can start with 10 minutes of physical activity each day.

Gradually increase that until your body adjusts and is able to maintain the recommended minutes.

Start With Low-Impact Exercise

Low-impact exercises are a good way to start your workout routine. You can use a stationary cycle, go swimming, or take a walk. Then you can explore other aerobic exercises, resistance training, and high-intensity interval training.

Don't Limit Yourself with Structured Workouts

When you say exercise, it's not limited to structured workouts. Everyday physical activities and recreation also count! In some cases, they can even burn more calories than in structured exercise.

These include walking to nearby establishments, lifting your grocery items, cleaning the house, and tending to your garden. Vacuuming your house is also a great routine!

In Summary

Exercise is a key element of any type 2 diabetes management strategy, and it can be fun! It has various benefits, such as improving insulin sensitivity, lowering blood sugar, and improving sleep.

Remember not to feel overwhelmed when starting out. It can be as simple as you want it to be. So start small and gradually improve from there.

Conclusion

Welcome to a transformative chapter of your life. If you are facing the confronting realization of type 2 diabetes, or even prediabetes, there should be no more procrastination. Let the empowerment begin.

Every day's delay allows the disease to develop further, for the symptoms to worsen, and your projected lifespan to shorten.

Action now will require physical and emotional effort, but you can turn your health outcomes around. You can become more mobile and less dependent on others. You can experience less pain and discomfort, especially in the future.

The old saying 'what you eat and drink today walks and runs tomorrow' can be extrapolated and multiplied hugely when it comes to dealing with type 2 diabetes. Your lifestyle choices, especially diet, will greatly determine your health, mobility, and longevity in the future, both short and long-term.

Most importantly, remain continually mindful of the fact that there is no medical 'cure'. The goal is to achieve a lifetime 'remission', and this can be achieved by making lifelong 'lifestyle' changes.

Remember always that self-discipline is the highest form of self-love and self-care.