

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes



There are risk factors for diabetes. However, keep in mind none of these mean you will develop type 2 diabetes. But ignoring these risk factors — given the rise in type 2 diabetes around the world — exposes you to potentially devastating complications.

We can't recommend strongly enough that you know:

- Your risk factors
- Your blood glucose numbers (when you visit your healthcare provider)

Based on the chart below, we recommend that you review and check off all the risk factors that apply to you.¹ Bring this chart with you to your next visit with your healthcare provider to start a discussion about what you can do to reduce some of these risk factors.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes ¹	Does it apply to you?	
You have a family history of diabetes, particularly a mother, father, sister or brother.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
You are overweight. * For more information about how your healthcare physician might evaluate excess weight, see next section.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Race. Although it's unclear why, people of certain races, including African Americans, Hispanics, American Indians and Asian-Americans, are at higher risk.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Age: Your risk increases as you get older.		
Inadequate physical activity, which means you do not have a regular routine of moderate/brisk aerobic exercise (at least three times a week for at least 30 minutes).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
High blood pressure	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
HDL ("good") cholesterol of less than 35 mg/dL (0.9 mmol/L) and/or triglyceride level of greater than 250 mg/dL (2.8 mmol/L). If you don't know your cholesterol numbers, please ask your healthcare provider to check at your next appointment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
A diet high in saturated fats, added sugar, high in cholesterol and low in fiber	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
A diagnosis of prediabetes or gestational diabetes when you were pregnant	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Smoking	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

Excess weight

Not all people who are overweight develop type 2 diabetes, and not all people who maintain a healthy weight are immune from developing it. But weight has been identified as a high-risk factor, so being overweight may put you at higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Why does weight matter? It's actually fat that's the culprit, because fat is resistant to insulin (the hormone that helps regulate the delivery of glucose to cells). If you are overweight, losing as little as 7 percent of your current weight can make a big difference with diabetes prevention.² Consult your healthcare provider about a healthy weight for you.

1. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetes/symptoms-causes/syc-20371444>, accessed on March 22, 2021
2. American Diabetes Association, "Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes - 2020," Diabetes Care, January 2020

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