



What is diabetes, and how do I know if I have it?



What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a life-long disease where your blood sugar (glucose) is too high because your body cannot make or use insulin the way it should. Insulin is a hormone the body makes that helps turn sugar from the food you eat into energy. When your body doesn't make insulin or use insulin the way it should, too much sugar stays in your blood.

There are 3 main types of diabetes:

→ Type 1 diabetes

Your body does not make insulin – it usually starts when you are a child or young adult

→ Type 2 diabetes

Your body makes insulin, but does not use insulin the way it should – it is the most common type of diabetes in adults, and more children have been getting it due to a rise in childhood obesity

→ Gestational diabetes

High blood sugar in pregnant women – it usually goes away after pregnancy ends, but may raise the mother's or baby's chances of getting type 2 diabetes later in life

What are the symptoms of diabetes?

Symptoms of diabetes include:



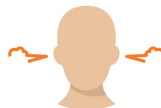
Feeling more thirsty or hungry than usual



Urinating (peeing) more than usual



Feeling very tired



Getting annoyed easily



Blurry vision



Losing weight without trying to (for type 1 diabetes only)



If you have any of these symptoms, call Casa de Salud right away to schedule an appointment: 314-977-1250

Am I more likely to get type 2 diabetes?

You may be more likely to get type 2 diabetes if you:

- Are overweight
- Do not move your body (exercise) at least 3 times a week
- Have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- Are Latino, Black, American Indian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- Are aged 45 years or older
- Have high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Had gestational diabetes while pregnant or have polycystic ovary syndrome (a condition with irregular menstrual periods, extra hair growth, and weight gain)

Diabetes is a big problem in the Latino community:

More than 1 in 10 Latino adults have diabetes.

Why is it important to find and treat diabetes early?

When diabetes is not treated, your blood sugar gets too high. High blood sugar makes your blood thicker and "sticky", which can damage your blood vessels and nerves.

This can lead to serious health problems such as:

- Problems with your heart and blood vessels, such as heart attack and stroke
- Kidney damage that may lead to kidney failure and need for dialysis treatments
- Nerve damage that causes tingling, numbness, or burning in your legs, hands, and feet and infections in your feet
- Loss of vision

How will I know if I have diabetes?

During your yearly wellness checkups, your health care provider may do a blood test to check you for diabetes. If they think you may have diabetes, they will do a blood test called hemoglobin A1C to check your blood sugar levels. The A1C test will show your blood sugar levels over the past 2 or 3 months.



- A result of 6.5% or higher on two A1C tests means you have diabetes.

How can Casa de Salud help?



Casa offers in-person or telehealth appointments on weekdays, evenings, and weekends.

- To schedule an appointment, call Casa de Salud at 314-977-1250.



Casa can also give you resources to learn more.

- To learn about diabetes, visit: casadesaludstl.org/resources

- To learn more about diabetes, visit:

- American Heart Association — heart.org
- Mayo Clinic — mayoclinic.org



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