What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce enough insulin or does not use insulin well. This results in high blood sugar levels.

Insulin is a hormone that helps control the amount of sugar in the blood. People with diabetes do not produce enough insulin or do not use insulin effectively. As a result, blood sugar levels become high.

Signs and symptoms of diabetes include:
- extreme thirst
- extreme hunger, especially at night
- frequent urination
- abdominal pain or cramping
- headache
- fatigue
- blurred vision
- dry skin

Common myths about diabetes:

Myth: Eating a lot of sugar can cause diabetes
Truth: While eating too much sugar can lead to obesity, which can contribute to diabetes, eating a lot of sugar alone does not cause diabetes.

Myth: People with diabetes can't eat fruit
Truth: Fruits are healthy foods, but they contain a lot of sugar. If you have diabetes, it's important to talk to your doctor or dietitian about the right amount of fruit you should eat each day.

Myth: Diabetes is contagious
Truth: Diabetes is not contagious. It cannot be transmitted from one person to another.

Myth: People with diabetes are more likely to catch colds and other infections
Truth: People with diabetes are more likely to get infections, but this is because they are more likely to have problems with their blood sugar levels. People with diabetes should get vaccinated against the flu, as they are more likely to have complications from the flu.

Myth: Fruits are healthy for people with diabetes
Truth: Fruits are healthy foods, but they contain a lot of sugar. If you have diabetes, it's important to talk to your doctor or dietitian about the right amount of fruit you should eat each day.

Linking Iraqis to Health Information

Iraqi Health Outreach Project

Refugee Health Programs
4750 North Sheridan Road, Suite 500
Chicago, IL 60640

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What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a disease that causes high blood sugar, either because the body does not produce enough insulin or because the body does not respond to (resists) the insulin that is produced.

**Type 1 diabetes**, the result of low insulin levels, is rare and is typically diagnosed in children and young adults. **Type 2 diabetes**, the result of insulin resistance, is much more common and usually occurs in adults; people who are overweight or have family members with type 2 diabetes are at higher risk.

### Signs and symptoms

Common symptoms are: extreme thirst; increased hunger; frequent urination; upset stomach; headache; feeling drowsy; blurred vision; dry skin.

### Myths and facts about diabetes

**Myth:** Eating too much sugar causes diabetes.
**Fact:** Diabetes is not caused by eating too much sugar—although eating too much sugar can make a person overweight, and being overweight can lead to diabetes.

**Myth:** You can catch diabetes from someone else.
**Fact:** Diabetes is not contagious.

**Myth:** People with diabetes are more likely to get colds and other illnesses.
**Fact:** You are not more likely to get a cold or another illness if you have diabetes. However, people with diabetes should get flu shots because they are more likely to develop complications if they get the flu.

**Myth:** Fruit is a healthy food and you can eat as much of it as you want.
**Fact:** Fruit is a healthy food, but it contains a lot of sugar. If you have diabetes, talk to your doctor or nutritionist about how much fruit is healthy to eat.

### Complications of diabetes

Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to eye and vision problems, kidney problems, and nerve damage (numbness, pain, loss of feeling).

### Treatment

Diabetes is a chronic disease that can be treated. Type 1 can be treated by injecting insulin. Oral medications, sometimes accompanied by insulin, are more common for type 2. Follow your doctor’s instructions about monitoring your blood sugar levels, taking prescribed medications, and modifying your diet.

### Prevention

Type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented. Type 2 diabetes can be prevented and sometimes controlled through eating healthy foods, exercising, and weight loss. It is important to practice prevention if you have a family history of diabetes.

### Resources

[Healthy Roads Media](http://www.healthyroadsmedia.org/topics/diabetes.htm)

[Refugee Health Information Network](http://www.rhin.org)

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov)

[American Diabetes Association](http://www.diabetes.org)

For more information about the IHOP Project, contact: refereehealthprograms@heartlandalliance.org (773) 751-4073

www.heartlandalliance.org/refereehealth

للعاجل

مرض السكري هو مرض مزمن و له علاج. سكري النمط الأول يعالج عبر حقن الأنسولين. سكري النمط الثاني عادةً يعالج عبر العقاقير الطبية فقط ولكن قد يحتاج بعض الناس أحياناً حقن الأنسولين أيضاً. تابع تعليمات الطبيب حول مراقبة مستويات السكر في الدم و أخذ الأدوية الموصوفة و تعديل نظام الأكل.

الوقاية من مرض السكري ليس هناك أي وسيلة للوقاية من سكري النمط الأول ولكن يمكن الوقاية من و السيطرة على سكري النمط الثاني من خلال الأكل بطريقة صحية و ممارسة الرياضة (كالمشي أو الركض أو سياقة الدراجات الهوائية أو السباحة) و السيطرة على الوزن. الوقاية من مرض السكري مهمة جداً خاصةً لو كان مرض السكري موجود في التاريخ الطبي للعائلة.

المضاعفات الطبية بمرض السكري السكري الغير مسيطر عليه يمكن أن يؤدي إلى أمراض العين و مشاكل في الرؤية، و مشاكل في صحة الكلى، و تلف الأعصاب مما يؤدي إلى الحشر الأحمر و فقدان الشعور في أطراف الجسم.